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Kevin Padian

Kevin Padian discusses — and debunks — ["Ten Myths about Charles Darwin"](#) [4] in the October 2009 issue of *BioScience*. "Charles Darwin is one of the most revered (and at times reviled) figures in Western history. A great many 'facts' about him and his ideas are the stuff of textbook myths, others are inaccuracies spread by antievolutionists, and still others are conventional historical mistakes long corrected but still repeated," he writes. "I present 10 such misconceptions, and some quick and necessarily incomplete rebuttals. New scholarship is rapidly clearing away some of these myths." Addressed are:

- As a boy Darwin was good only for "shooting, dogs, and rat-catching"
- Darwin was a "mere companion" to Captain Robert FitzRoy on the HMS *Beagle*
- Darwin's epiphany about natural selection came while visiting the Galápagos Islands
- Darwin stole the credit for natural selection from Alfred Russel Wallace
- Population thinking
- Dual criteria for classification: Genealogy and similarity
- Gradual change is slow and steady
- Human evolution was shaped mainly by natural selection
- Sexual selection is all about how many offspring you leave

- Darwin was a confirmed atheist who had a deathbed conversion to Christianity

Padian concludes, "Myths will always arise and abound ... It is hoped that this myth-busting scholarship will soon filter down to revisions of textbooks that discuss Darwin and to public discourse about his life and work." President of NCSE's board of directors, Padian is Professor of Integrative Biology at the University of California at Berkeley and also Curator of Paleontology at the University of California Museum of Paleontology. (Thanks to *BioScience* for graciously making Padian's article freely available online.)

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