

## This ‘hot mess’ bird links dinosaur and avian evolution

Yes, birds are [technically modern dinosaurs](#). But sometimes it's tough to tell where the non-avian dino ends and the bird begins. As [John Pickrell at National Geographic](#) reports, scientists have now [discovered](#) a 127-million-year-old fossil that blends its avian features with some pretty prehistoric quirks, shedding new light on the evolution of flying birds.

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[T]he newly-named *Jinguoortis perplexus* was kind of a hot mess. In fact, it derives the latter half of its name from its perplexing occupancy of a sort of dino-bird uncanny valley, according to new the paper published in the journal [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#). As it turns out, *J. perplexus* may have been bafflingly ill-adapted at flying—due mostly to growing pains as it transitioned away from its dinosaur relatives.

For one, *J. perplexus* sported some features we don't typically see on today's chickens and crows, like a toothy jaw in place of a beak.

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The bird's wonky wings illustrate that the the evolution of avian flight “was not one direct path,” [says paleontologist Dennis Voeten] “Dinosaurs may have ‘experimented’ with different flight styles”

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Study author [Min] Wang agrees—and isn't one to mince words. As he explains it to Pickrell at National Geographic, “This new bird fossil shows that [this evolutionary path] was much more messy [than we once thought].”

**Read full, original post:** [This 127-Million-Year-Old Fossil Links Dinosaur and Bird Evolution](#)