

FEATHERED DINOSAURS?

ACCORDING to many evolutionists, dinosaurs did not become extinct, they merely evolved into birds, and the birds which now soar so effortlessly through the skies are the dinosaurs' living descendants¹. Those committed to an evolutionary explanation of life must, of course, believe that birds evolved from something, and reptiles seem the only possible candidates as bird ancestors. However, believing it happened is one thing; providing evidence for this transition is much more difficult.

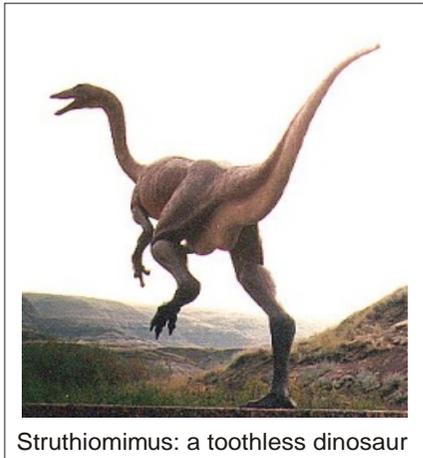
TEETH AND CLAWS

Ever since Darwin's time, evolutionists have tried to find the "missing link" between reptiles and birds. The discovery in 1861 of *Archaeopteryx* was hailed as evidence for the reptile-bird transition, and it was even described as a "feathered dinosaur" by some palaeontologists. It was said to have reptilian characteristics — teeth and wing claws — together with bird-like characteristics — wings and feathers. However, this is a gross oversimplification; some dinosaurs, such as *Ornithomimus* and *Struthiomimus*, had no teeth, and some extinct birds, like *Hesperornis*, did have teeth! As for wing claws, some modern birds, such as the ostrich and hoatzin, possess wing claws. *Archaeopteryx*, therefore, was a true bird, and its feathers indicate it was a true flier.



Hesperornis: these extinct birds had teeth

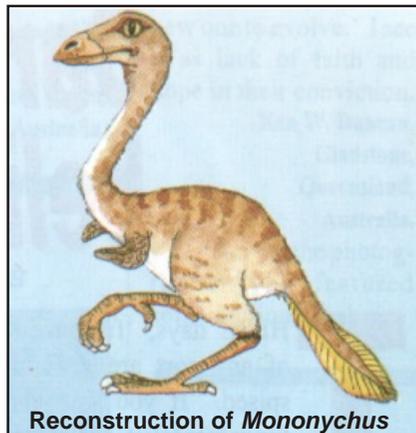
creature with a coat of fine feathers and a long feathery tail. However, the report of the fossil find reveals that no feathers were found! It was merely suggested that *Mononychus* was "probably covered with feathers."² It seems clear that this creature was a theropod dinosaur, and its front limbs in no way resembled wings, but were just tiny stubs. Indeed, some researchers suggested that it may have lost the power of flight! There is no real



Struthiomimus: a toothless dinosaur

NEW LINK?

Evolutionists, however, have not given up on the "feathered dinosaur" theory, and have regularly presented some new fossil find as a "missing link". In 1993 the fossils of a turkey-sized creature was found in Mongolia. Named *Mononychus*, it was described as a "new link between dinosaurs and birds", and a full-colour picture on the cover of *Time* magazine (April 26th 1993) showed a



Reconstruction of *Mononychus*

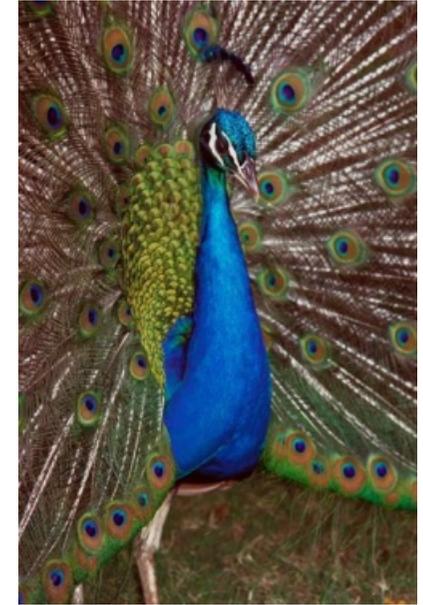
evidence that *Mononychus* was in any way related to birds, and, according to evolutionary dating, it lived 80 million years *later* than the true bird *Archaeopteryx*.

SCIENTISTS CONNED

IN the year 2000 the "dinosaurs-to-bird" theory took a knock when a much-acclaimed "missing link" labelled *Archaeoraptor* turned out to be a clever hoax by someone who had combined the body of a bird fossil with the tail of a dinosaur. The prestigious *National Geographic* magazine featured this fossil —for which it had paid £50,000—as "the best evidence since *Archaeopteryx*" that birds evolved from dinosaurs,³ then had to retract after *Science News* revealed the truth.⁴ Soon afterwards, maybe to try to rescue their damaged reputation, evolutionists produced "the most bird-like dinosaur yet discovered."⁵ This was the fossil of a chicken-sized creature named *Bambiraptor*, which had been discovered in Montana, USA seven years earlier. Although artists' reconstructions showed this creature sporting feathers, no trace of feathers was found with the fossil! More recently, evolutionists claimed to have "final proof" that dinosaurs evolved into birds. They point to the fossil *Sinornithosaurus*, nick-named "fuzzy raptor". Said to be a "feathered dinosaur", it was displayed with other fossils, at a special "Dino-birds" exhibition at London's Natural History museum during 2002. However, no feathers are visible on the fossil, merely a few hair-like fibres. Although these are claimed to be the "precursors of feathers", this is mere conjecture.

SPECIALISED STRUCTURES

Feathers are specialised structures, designed for both lightness and strength. Evolutionists claim that they evolved from frayed reptilian scales, but no fossil evidence of such a transition exists. It takes a great leap of faith to believe that the tail of a peacock originated from reptilian scales! The uninformed public may be persuaded that turning a dinosaur into a bird would not be too difficult. However, in their enthusiasm to prove their claims, evolutionists are glossing over other important differences between reptiles and birds, such as the unique avian respiratory system. Unlike other



vertebrates, all birds, from ostriches to hummingbirds, have a "one-way" system of breathing, with air flowing in one end and out of the other, passing through a series of air sacs. Neither can evolutionists explain where the new genetic information could have come from to transform dinosaurs into birds. Another major objection is that, according to the evolutionists' own dating system, all the so-called "missing links" are **millions of years younger** than *Archaeopteryx*, and the **same age** as modern-type bird fossils!

SEPARATE AND DISTINCT

There remains a massive gap in the fossil record between reptiles and birds. No dinosaurs with true feathers have been found, although some appear to have had some kind of hairy, downy covering. Reptiles and birds are separate and distinct in the living world, and the fossil record shows that they always have been. This suggests that birds originated by special creation, not evolution. "God created..., every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good." (*Genesis 1: 21*)

References:

1. For evidence that dinosaurs have co-existed with humans, see CRT Factsheet No. 35.
2. *Time* (Australia), April 26th. 1993.
3. *National Geographic*, October 1999.
4. *Science News*, January 15th 2000.
5. *Science* No. 287, March 24th 2000.