

# Important events in evolution

Significant events which impacted the history of Earth

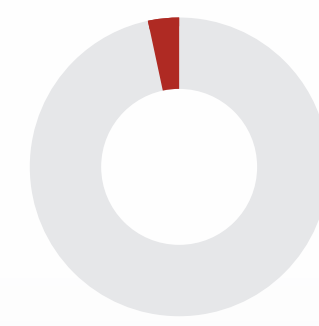
**160 million years ago**  
Earliest birds

11:34:57 HRS

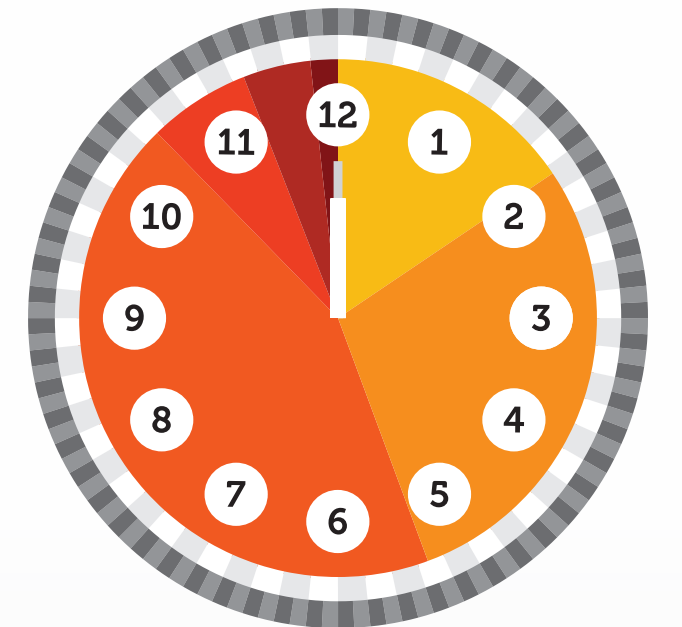
The scientific consensus is that birds evolved from carnivorous dinosaurs around 165 to 155 million years ago. In the nineteenth century, the famous English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, better known as Darwin's Bulldog, was the first one to propose this idea.

To say that birds are dinosaurs is equivalent to saying that humans are mammals.

The earliest bird fossil is *Archaeopteryx litographica*, dating to the Upper Jurassic, 168 million years ago, and found in a limestone quarry near Solnhofen, Germany.



Earliest birds



The first specimen was discovered in 1861, just around the same time as when Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. He even knew about this discovery. Since then, ten more specimens have been found.

*Archaeopteryx* was about the size of a crow, with short, broad wings and a long tail. Its feathers were similar to those of living birds, but had jaws with sharp teeth, three fingers ending in curved claws and a long bony tail. Some of its features resembled those of contemporary birds, like feathers, but it had teeth and a long tail like all dinosaurs.

All these characteristics, differing from modern birds, provide evidence that birds descended from dinosaurs.

