

# The Four-Winged Bird Myth In The New Scientist

The 22 May 2004 issue of *New Scientist* magazine carried a report titled "Four-winged birds were first to take to the air." The article concerned an investigation into the fossil *Archaeopteryx* by zoologist Per Christiansen of the University of Copenhagen. Christiansen reported the existence of objects resembling traces of feathers along the fossil's back, around its legs and possibly on the base of its neck.<sup>1</sup> The *New Scientist* article recalls a parallel claim made by Nick Longrich, a graduate student at the University of Calgary in Canada<sup>2</sup>, referring to his claim that the *Archaeopteryx* specimen had flight feathers on its legs.

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These two claims that *Archaeopteryx* had feathers in these regions of its body are being linked to the "four-winged bird theory" regarding the alleged evolutionary origins of flight. It will be remembered that the four-winged bird thesis was based on the discovery of a 130-million-year-old *Microraptor gui* fossil announced to the world in January, 2003. The finding of traces indicating feather on the fore arms and rear legs of this fossil, reported as belonging to a dinosaur, led to evolutionist speculation that flight had evolved from four-winged birds capable of gliding from tree to tree. At that time we revealed, with evidence, how such conjecture was mere fantasy in the face of the scientific [facts](#).

*New Scientist* is now bringing this claim up all over again, maintaining that the thesis that "the earliest birds were four-winged gliders, and that these later developed into birds capable of beating their wings" is supported by the two studies in question.

However, what the researchers who carried out these two studies announced in *New Scientist* have done consists of setting out forced conjecture in the light of a fantasy that flies in the face of scientific findings. The four-winged bird thesis is nothing but a myth. In reality, *M. gui* constitutes no scientific basis to show that flight emerged through evolution. The fact that *M. gui* is 20 million years younger than *Archaeopteryx*, the oldest known fossil bird, makes the evolutionary scenario ascribed to it totally groundless. Moreover, even prominent evolutionist palaeontologists admit the impossibility of *M. gui*'s anatomy undergoing an evolution that could result in powered, flapping flight.

Palaeontologist Henry Gee, for instance, an editor for *Nature*, opposes the claim that *M. gui*'s gliding movement is related to bird flight by saying "**Four wings is a perfect recipe for gliding, but not for powered, flapping flight.**"<sup>3</sup>

You can read an article of ours that deals with the claim that the first birds were four-winged and that reveals the insoluble dilemmas facing evolutionists with regard to *M. gui* [here](#).

1. Comptes Rendus Palevol, vol. 3, p. 99

2. *New Scientist*, 25 October 2003, p. 15

3. Henry Gee, "Fossil boosts trees-down start for flight," *Nature Science Update*; Perspective on Ref.1, 23 January 2003

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