

UK museum's 'earliest known bird' flies coop for Tokyo show

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Britain's Natural History Museum is sending its most precious fossil, a 147 million-year-old skeleton that established the link between dinosaurs and birds, abroad for the first time.

The archaeopteryx was discovered in Germany encased in limestone in 1861. It shows characteristics of both early birds and [dinosaurs](#), with feathers, claws and teeth.

The museum is sending it to Japan as part of its biggest-ever global exhibition. Known as the "London specimen," it will go on show with 300 other exhibits at Tokyo's Museum of Nature and Science for three months from March 18.

The British [museum](#)'s Prof. Paul Barrett says the fossil's "lasting historical legacy" is that it establishes birds as dinosaurs.

It's one of only 11 full-body examples of the [archaeopteryx](#) to have been formally identified.

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