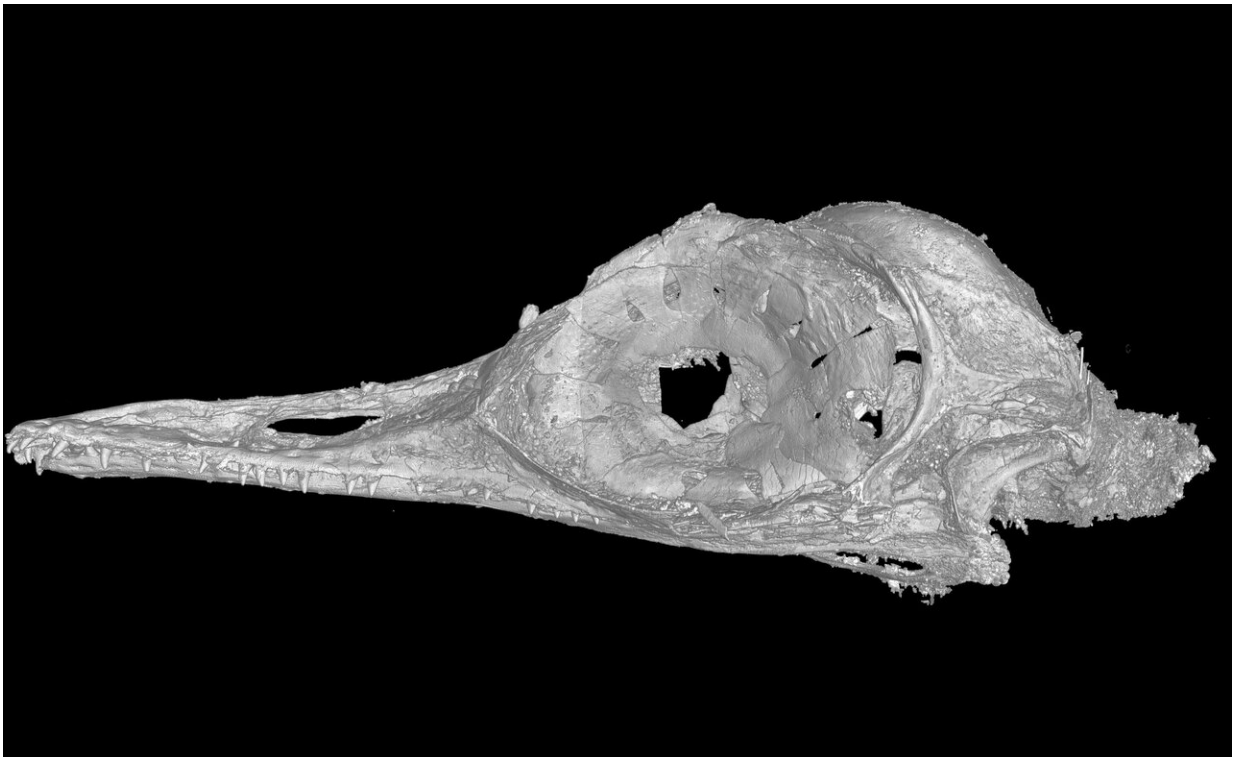


# Paper describing hummingbird-sized dinosaur retracted

July 24 2020, by Bob Yirka

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A CT scan of the skull of *Oculudentavis* by LI Gang, *Oculudentavis* means eye-tooth-bird, so named for its distinctive features. Credit: Lars Schmitz

The journal *Nature* has issued a retraction for a paper it published March 11<sup>th</sup> called "[Hummingbird-sized dinosaur from the Cretaceous period of Myanmar](#)." The editorial staff was alerted to a possible misclassification of the fossil embedded in amber, and after review, agreed with the

assessment and issued the retraction.

When the [paper](#) was published, many mainstream publications were intrigued by the story and wrote about the findings, giving the team from China, the U.S. and Canada a bit of notoriety. But shortly thereafter, others in the field began questioning the categorization of the fossil—many suggested it appeared to be a lizard, which is a different group of reptiles from the [dinosaurs](#).

The specimen in question is a very small [skull](#) embedded in amber, believed to be approximately 100 million years old—dating it to the time of the dinosaurs. The researchers described the specimen as a bird-like skull less than two centimeters in length—approximately the size of a hummingbird skull. And its mouth was filled with teeth.

Some in the field were so sure that it was a lizard and not a dinosaur that they wrote and uploaded a [paper](#) to the bioRxiv preprint server outlining their concerns. The authors of the paper then published a response addressing their concerns and refuting the skeptics' arguments. That was followed by another team reporting that they had found a similar fossil and after studying it, had deemed it to be a lizard. In reviewing both the paper and the evidence presented by others in the field, the editors at *Nature* chose to retract the paper.

The researchers who published the original paper appear to be divided on their assessment of the [retraction](#), with some insisting there was no reason for the paper to be retracted and others acknowledging that they had made a mistake when they classified their find as a dinosaur. In either case, all of the researchers agree that the work they did on the fossil was valid and thus the paper could be used as a source by others in the future—it is only the classification of the find that has been put in doubt.

**More information:** Lida Xing et al. Retraction Note: Hummingbird-sized dinosaur from the Cretaceous period of Myanmar, *Nature* (2020). DOI: [10.1038/s41586-020-2553-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2553-9)

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