



# Taking Wing: Archaeopteryx and the Evolution of Bird Flight

*Pat Shipman*

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In 1861, just a few years after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, a scientist named Hermann von Meyer made an amazing discovery. Hidden in the Bavarian region of Germany was a fossil skeleton so exquisitely preserved that its wings and feathers were as obvious as its reptilian jaws and tail. This transitional creature offered tangible proof of Darwin's theory of evolution.

Hailed as the First Bird, *Archaeopteryx* has remained the subject of heated debates for the last 140 years. Are birds actually living dinosaurs? Where does the fossil record really lead? Did flight originate from the "ground up" or "trees down"? Pat Shipman traces the age-old human desire to soar above the earth and to understand what has come before us. *Taking Wing* is science as adventure story, told with all the drama by which scientific understanding unfolds.

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