GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORS

Selection criteria

The criteria for selection are scientific excellence, originality and interest across disciplines within biology. The Editors are responsible for all editorial decisions and they make these decisions based on the reports received from the referees and/or Editorial Board members.

Many more good manuscripts are submitted to us than we have space to print, and we give preference to those that present significant advances of broad interest. Submission of preliminary reports, of articles that merely confirm previous findings, and of articles that are likely to interest only small groups of specialists, is not encouraged. All articles are sent to Editorial Board members for an initial assessment of their suitability, and may be returned to authors without in-depth peer review if this assessment makes it seem unlikely that they will be accepted.

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Cover image: Clockwise from left: A new fossil bird, *Zhongjianornis yangi*, from the Early Cretaceous (about 120 million years old) lake deposits from Liaoning, China, represents the most basal bird that had completely lost teeth, suggesting that the avian beak appeared independently in several lineages in early avian evolution. The genus and species names both honour the late Professor Zhongjian Yang (Chung-Chien Young), father of Chinese vertebrate paleontology and founder of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. (See pages 219–227; image courtesy of Zhonghe Zhou.) Right lateral view of the skull of the Upper Cretaceous lizard Tianyusaurus (NHMG 9316), Jiangxi Province, China. (See pages 331–336; photograph by Mo Jin You.) *Coronocephalus gaoluoensis* Wu, 1979; collected and identified by Yuan Wenwei; exoskeleton, P9301224, x1.5; from the Xiushan Formation (Telychian, Llandovery, Silurian) of Yongshun, western Hunan, China. (See pages 257–266.) UV picture showing the soft tissue of the pterosaur *Jeholopterus ningchengensis*. (See pages 321–329; image courtesy of Helmut Tischlinger.)