ACTA PALAEONTOLOGICA POLONICA

The Early Eocene bird *Gallinuloides wyomingensis* - a stem group representative of Galliformes

Gerald Mayr and Ilka Weidig
Acta Palaeontologica Polonica 49 (2), 2004: 211-217

We identified a second, perfectly preserved skeleton of the earliest known galliform bird, *Gallinuloides wyomingensis* Eastman. The new specimen clearly shows that *G. wyomingensis* does not belong to crown group Galliformes as assumed by earlier authors. In particular, the primitive presence of a deeply excavated, concave facies articularis scapularis at the coracoid precludes the inclusion of *G. wyomingensis* into crown group Galliformes. Gallinuloides wyomingensis is morphologically very similar to *Paraortygoides messelensis* Mayr, a nearly contemporaneous galliform from Messel, Germany. The exclusive presence of stem group galliform birds in pre-Oligocene deposits does not support the Gondwanan origin of Galliformes as evidenced by the Southern Hemisphere distribution of basal crown group members (Megapodiidae and Cracidae).

Key words: Aves, Galliformes, Gallinuloides, Paraortygoides, Green River Formation, Eocene.

Gerald Mayr [Gerald.Mayr@senckenberg.de] and Ilka Weidig [Ilka.Weidig@senckenberg.de], Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg, Division of Ornithology, Senckenberganlage 25, D–60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (for details please see creativecommons.org), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Full text (455.5 kB)