

Birds are the direct descendants of a group of dinosaurs that lived millions of years ago. The modern bird lineage stretches back to 165 million years ago to the Jurassic period. Some of the first birds are considered to be the Archaeopteryx and Anchiornis based on their long arms, feathered bodies, wings, and other physical characteristics. The branch point represents common ancestors that existed in the past among these bird lineages. Mesites and sandgrouse shared a common ancestor 60 million years ago. This common ancestor would later split to form two lineages, one giving rise to doves and the other leading to mesites. As a result, the next time you see a rock dove flying by or picking up scraps in a city square, remember that you're really looking at a dinosaur!

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