

## Parrot fossil found in Scandinavia

The discovery of a parrot fossil in Scandinavia dating back some 55 million years, indicates that they were once common in colder climates like Norway and Denmark.

Parrots today live only in the tropics and the southern hemisphere, but this new research suggests that they first evolved in the north, much earlier than had been suspected.

The remains were discovered on the Isle of Mors in northwest Denmark, the place where you least expect to find a parrot. It's a new species, officially named 'Mopsitta tanta', but nicknamed 'Danish Blue Parrot', reports ScienceDaily.

David Waterhouse, co-author of a paper on the discovery, explained: "We are dealing with a bird that is bereft of life, but the tricky bit is establishing that it was a parrot."

The paper has been published in the latest issue of the journal Palaeontology.

As with many fragile bird fossils, it is a wonder that anything remains at all, and all that remains of this early Danish parrot is a single upper wing bone (humerus).

But, this small bone contains characteristic features that show that it is clearly from a member of the parrot family, about the size of a Yellow-crested Cockatoo.

'Around 55 million years old, this is very much an ex-parrot. Indeed, Mopsitta represents the oldest and most northerly convincing remains of a parrot ever to have been discovered,' Waterhouse said.

'When Mopsitta was alive, most of northern [Europe](#) was experiencing a warm period, with a large shallow tropical lagoon covering much of Germany, South East England and Denmark.'

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