ADVANCED CONCRETE INSPIRED BY MOTHER-OF-PEARL

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Mother-of-pearl, also called *nacre,* is famous for its strength. Yet it is made from weak ingredients: brittle *aragonite* (a form of calcium carbonate) and soft protein. Its toughness comes from how these parts are arranged (creation.com/abalone).

In nacre, tiny mineral tiles are stacked in layers and joined by thin protein sheets. These soft layers let the tiles move slightly when stressed. This absorbs energy and helps stop cracks from spreading.

Engineers have copied this idea to make a tougher form of concrete. Ordinary concrete is strong but brittle. In the new version, thin sheets of hardened cement are laser-cut into small hexagonal tiles. Soft polymer layers are placed between them, and the layers are stacked in an offset pattern, like bricks in a wall.

When stressed, the tiles can slide slightly. This movement absorbs energy and slows the growth of cracks. The soft layers also help prevent cracks from spreading from one layer to the next.

The result is a material more than 17 times tougher than hardened cement paste alone (no sand or gravel). And it may help future structures resist cracking and sudden failure.

Gupta, S. *et al.,* Tough and ductile architected nacre-like cementitious composites, *Advanced Functional Materials* **34**(39):2313516, 25 Sep 2024.

'WAY TOO HOT' GALAXY CLUSTER CHALLENGES EVOLUTION THEORIES

Secular researchers have stumbled across a massive galaxy cluster supposedly existing in the early universe 'only' 1.4 billion years after the alleged big bang.

The study of the cluster, published in *Nature*, used Chile's powerful ALMA radio telescope (Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array).

The team interpreted their findings as showing that the cluster has over 30 galaxies, three supermassive black holes, and is thought to be forming stars "more than 5,000 times as fast as the Milky Way".

But a problem arises when calculating the temperature of the intracluster medium, using well-established physical principles. It seems "at least five times hotter than current theories of cluster formation predict it should be", relative to its supposed age.

The "scorching" cluster was "blazing far earlier and hotter than current models of galaxy cluster formation predict should be possible".

Since models within both conventional and creationist frameworks are always subject to change, having to revise or abandon a model is not in itself a good cause for criticism. But in recent times, with more powerful equipment and techniques, findings contrary to current big bang models have been coming thick and fast. At the least, therefore, much greater humility would have long been in order, rather than triumphant pronouncements of fallible models as 'scientific certainties'.

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Ware, S., 'How can all of this be happening?': Scientists spot massive group of ancient galaxies so hot they shouldn't exist, livescience.com, 7 Jan 2026.

ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE IS NOT 'EVOLUTION'

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In yet another example, scientists found antibiotic resistance in microbes that pre-date the use of modern antibiotics, this time by thousands of years.

Romanian scientists isolated the *Psychrobacter* bacterial strain from Scarisoara Ice Cave (pictured). Despite its ancient origin, it showed resistance to multiple modern antibiotics and carries over 100 resistance-related genes.

The strain proved resistant to all 10 classes of antibiotics tested. These included ones used to treat tuberculosis and urinary tract infections.

Clearly, these microbes did not 'evolve' their antibiotic resistance through exposure to antibiotic treatments. They already had it.

Frozen for 5,000 years, this ice cave bacterium resists modern antibiotics, sciencedaily.com, 21 Feb 2026.

PENGUINS CHOOSE LONGER ROUTES TO SAVE ENERGY

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Some modern sat-nav (GPS) apps allow you to choose energy-saving routes, which are not always the shortest. Penguins were doing this long ago.

Using GPS loggers, researchers tracked 27 Magellanic penguins (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) returning to their colony in Argentina.

It turns out that these penguins 'hitch a ride' on ocean currents and tides. By allowing themselves to drift away from the shortest path—a straight line—they actually conserve energy overall.

Rather than exerting effort to swim against a current, they save their strength for deep dives to hunt prey. This food then supplies them with more energy. They also somehow seem to know that the tide goes one way for a while, and later the opposite way.

As they approach home, they hunt less and focus more on navigation. Despite travelling up to 75 km (47 miles) on a single trip, they consistently arrive within 300 m (330 yards) of their starting point. And they can do this on a dark night, so the scientists don't think this navigation is mostly based on sight. "Instead, they may use a mix of compass orientation, smell, and detection of flow against their body."

All of these require complete, functional systems—vision, built-in compass, olfactory organ, pressure sensing, and a brain to process and integrate the data. And specific programmed instructions in the DNA to construct and operate it all.

Sounds like a lot of intelligent design.

Gajbhiye, S., Why penguins ride the currents instead of swimming straight home, earth.com, 24 Jul 2025.

DINOSAUR DESIGNER FASHION?

'A handbag made from *T. rex* collagen' was announced on 2 April, but it wasn't an April Fool's joke. The one-of-a-kind bag, to be auctioned in May 2026, is expected to fetch an eye-watering sum.

For many years, collagen and other organic molecules have been discovered preserved in dinosaur bones. This caused amazement and consternation in the secular scientific community, because they believe dinosaur fossils are at least 66 million years old. Modern contamination has been ruled out, yet such biomolecules simply should not last that long. Unwilling to surrender long-age belief, many speculate an unknown mechanism must have preserved them over deep time.

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The handbag is claimed to be of dinosaur leather. Leather is made from skin, and type 1 collagen occurs in both skin and bone. The collagen fragments from the *T. rex* fossils most likely came from bone. These fossils would have been buried in Noah's Flood—less than 4.5 millennia ago, which explains why the protein is still present.

These collagen fragments would not provide a complete amino acid sequence. However, AI modelling and 'educated guesswork' would help fill the gaps, producing a plausible sequence and the corresponding DNA code. A synthetic gene could then be inserted into a laboratory organism such as yeast, turning each cell into a factory churning out 'dinosaur collagen' for the handbag leather.

Crucially, even if the sequence were exactly identical, every atom in the collagen would still come from the nutrient broth in the culture. The leather is therefore entirely modern and not made from the original dinosaur protein.

Van Campenhout, C., Dinosaur collagen used to create one-of-a-kind handbag, reuters.com, 2 Apr 2026.

THE GLORIOUSLY WEIRD PLATYPUS

The platypus's peculiar design continues to astound.

Melanosomes are the tiny spherical or rod-shaped factories within cells that make the brown pigments that give animals their coat or feather colours. In mammals they are solid, in birds they are hollow and rod-shaped. The nanostructure organization of the melanosomes in birds diffracts light, creating brilliant feather colours.

Scientists at Ghent University (Belgium) used a powerful microscope to look at the melanosomes in platypus hairs. They are hollow, unlike those in over 120 other mammals looked at. Bird melanosomes are hollow, but not known to be spherical, as these are.

Leigh Dobson, lead author on the scientific paper, commented that, "This was totally unexpected."

Echidnas, also egg-laying mammals and supposedly related to platypuses, have solid ones.

This discovery adds to the weirdness of the platypus. This weirdness includes:

- A duck-like bill and a beaver-like tail
- A mammal that lays eggs
- Females produce milk but don't have nipples
- Males have venomous spurs on their hind legs
- They sense electricity
- Their fur glows under UV light
- They have five times the sex chromosomes of most other mammals (5 sets of XX or 5 sets of XY).

It's not surprising that taxidermy specimens of platypuses sent to Europe over 200 years ago were thought to be a hoax. The platypus is just one of God's many awesome creaturely designs, which challenge evolutionary conjectures that would rob Him of His glory.

Dobson, J.L. *et al.,* A unique hollow melanosome morphology in the hairs of platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*, *Biol. Lett.* **22**(3):2025.0721, 1 Mar 2026.

Pilcher, H., "Totally unexpected." Scientists just discovered yet another extraordinary thing about the platypus, discoverwildlife.com, 18 Mar 2026.

ARCHAEOPTERYX: EVEN MORE BIRDLIKE

Archaeopteryx is often called an ideal intermediate between predatory theropod dinosaurs and birds. However, its evolutionary date of 'Upper Jurassic' (150 million years) places it millions of years *before* the supposed ancestors of modern birds. It also has many bird-like features, including the unique one-way bird lung and long tertial flight feathers (*Creation* **47**(3):20–23, 2025, **48**(1):10, 2026).

Even Archie's long, thin tail is not like the heavy, muscular theropod tail that aided running. Rather, it was more likely a pitch stabilizer during flight. Furthermore, its contemporary *Baminornis* likely had a short tail with fused bones like modern birds (*pygostyle*).

Archie also had a kinetic skull (*cranial kinesis*). That means its upper jaw could also move relative to the skull—as in birds but not dinosaurs. A 2026 paper shows that Archie's head had three other unique features found in modern birds but not in land-dwelling theropods:

- Bill-tip that senses mechanical forces. In modern birds, its fine nerve endings enable detection of small prey, precision pecking, and foraging without looking.
- Very mobile tongue. Good for efficient food capture, manipulating food in the beak, and transporting it to the throat.
- Oral papillae. Archie had bumps on the roof of its mouth. They grip food and, together with a mobile tongue, guide it backwards while swallowing.

The researchers explain that all these evolved to meet the increased energy demands of flying creatures. But they fit equally well with being designed for flight from the beginning.

O'Connor, J.K. *et al.,* Avian features of *Archaeopteryx* feeding apparatus reflect elevated demands of flight, *Innovation* **7**(2):101086, 2026.

Marshall, M., How did birds evolve? The answer is wilder than anyone thought, *Nature News*, 13 Jan 2026.

SHARKS PLAYING POSSUM?

Despite being some of the most fearsome predators in the ocean, many sharks can be tickled to sleep! Depending on the species, they can be put into a trance by rubbing the electrosensory regions around their snout. Or by flipping them over or applying pressure to the caudal (tail) fin. The trance is known as *tonic immobility* (TI).

What is the purpose of TI in Chondrichthyes (cartilaginous fish, e.g., sharks and rays)? Suggestions include to 'play dead' (like the opossum) to deter predators; to aid in mating (some male shark species are known to invert a female shark, potentially to induce TI); or to act as a way to 'cool down' sensory overload (e.g., if their electrosensing receptors are over-stimulated).

But recently, researchers said these explanations are unlikely. They proposed TI was vestigial. I.e., an evolutionary leftover that was somehow useful for early shark ancestors. Now (supposedly millions of years later) it provides no survival or reproductive advantage. They said, "no adaptive hypothesis exists to satisfactorily explain the function of TI" in today's Chondrichthyes.

But such a complex and widespread mechanism has the hallmarks of purposeful design. If it were useless, it would likely soon be eliminated by natural selection. Perhaps it had a non-predation purpose pre-Fall that is no longer advantageous post-Fall. Or perhaps we don't yet know its function. That is often the case with supposedly 'vestigial' things (creation.com/vestigialarguments).

Gayford, J.H. and Rummer, J.L., Tonic immobility in cartilaginous fishes (Chondrichthyes): function, evolutionary history, and future directions, *Rev Fish Biol Fisheries* **35**:1301–1315, 2025.

HOW NOW, BROWN COW?

Many evolutionists were very excited in 1960 when the first scientifically documented observation of true tool use in a non-human was published. Renowned chimp observer Jane Goodall (1934–2025) documented one of her subjects poking stalks and blades of grass to 'fish' for termites in a nest. The chimp also improved on this 'implement' by stripping leaves off a twig. Since chimps are supposedly the closest to man on the evolutionary tree, this rather modest achievement nonetheless fitted the evolutionary story.

Since then, certain crows, supposedly far more evolutionarily distant to man, have surpassed chimps in tool use, even displaying multistep planning. E.g., using one tool, too short to reach a food morsel, to reach a longer tool which can. They are capable of planning ahead up to eight deliberate steps like this. African grey parrots are even more intelligent, showing understanding of abstract concepts like 'shape' and 'colour'.

Such observations were a setback for the 'chimps are almost humans' story. Now even a domestic cow has been documented by researchers as exhibiting true tool use. Veronika, a Swiss brown cow (*Bos taurus*) routinely picks up and uses sticks or even a broom to scratch herself in distinctly goal-directed ways. She will even choose which end of the broom to use, depending on the body area. And she's been doing it for years, with no training.

This latest example of animal tool use continues to be inconvenient for evolutionary storytelling.

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Simms, S., Ever watched a pet cow pick up a broom and scratch herself with it? You have now, livescience.com, 19 Jan 2026.

CHINESE SKULL "OUT OF SYNC" WITH EVOLUTIONARY IDEAS

As discussed in *Creation* **48**(1), the Yunxian 2 *Homo erectus* cranium from China had already had three different 'ages' assigned by various methods, ranging from 488,000 years to 1.1 Ma (million years). Now Tu *et al*. have used a fourth approach to 'date' the site at supposedly 1.77 Ma ago. One of the study's co-authors, Christopher Bae, says this means "we need to consider pushing the origin of *Homo erectus* back" to around 2.6 Ma ago.

Chris Stringer from London's Natural History Museum wrote that "such a great age [nearly 1.8 Ma] would put it completely out of sync with the rest of the fossil record."

Even more surprising for evolutionists than the 'early' date is the relatively large brain of this *H. erectus* individual so close to the supposed 'birth' of the species. The Yunxian 2 individual had about the same sized brain (1143 cc) as Anatole France (~1100 cc) who won the 1921 Nobel Prize for Literature. If brain size was well within the 'modern' human range early on, then this goes against the evolutionary idea that brain size gradually increased from small *H. erectus* brains to modern human brains over two million years or so. It indicates there was considerable variation in brain size in 'ancient' human populations, just as today.

Tu, H. *et al*., The oldest in situ *Homo erectus* crania in eastern Asia: The Yunxian site dates to ~1.77 Ma, *Science Advances* **12**(8):eady2270, 2026.

Berdugo, S., 'Absolute surprise': *Homo erectus* skulls found in China are almost 1.8 million years old—the oldest evidence of the ancient human relatives in East Asia, livescience.com, 19 Feb 2026.

HEALTH HAZARD IN THE WOMB

That smoking is damaging to health is long established. But for a pregnant woman, smoking also comes with substantial risks to her baby's health. For example, children of smoking mothers are much more likely to suffer asthma.

Following a successful program in Britain, the Dutch have adopted a gift voucher scheme to help expectant mothers stop their habit. This government concern for the unborn child is appropriate and laudable. But the Brits and Dutch each allow 'legal' abortion up to 24 weeks into the pregnancy. Clearly, being killed in the womb is a far greater health hazard than smoking for the unborn child. And although certain grounds must be met, in practice it is effectively abortion on request in most cases.

Abortion is rife in many western countries. The UK did a record 278,000 in 2023, and the Netherlands, with a much smaller population, performed almost 40,000. Both countries saw a 10–11% rise from the previous year.

Many women are using abortion as a birth-control method (see creation.com/diy-abortion), convincing themselves they are only getting rid of 'a clump of cells'. This is, sadly, not surprising. There have been many decades of false evolution-inspired teaching that human life in the womb is not really human (see creation.com/fraud-rediscovered). However, biologically, human life begins at conception. And the Bible says that every child is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3–5).

DutchNews, Pilot scheme offers pregnant women vouchers to quit smoking, dutchnews.nl, 26 Jan 2026.

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