

Scientists grow chickens with dinosaur legs

By Michael Harthorne Published March 17, 2016 Newser
Fox News Science



Scientists were able to grow chicken embryos with dinosaur-like legs by manipulating a single gene. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

Scientists—presumably so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they didn't stop to think whether they should—have grown chickens with dinosaur legs, Phys.org reports. More accurately, a team at the University of Chile grew chicken embryos with dinosaur-like fibulas.

In modern birds, the fibula is shorter than the tibia and is "splinter-like," according to the study published earlier this month in *Evolution*. Discover Magazine reports that by suppressing the Indian Hedgehog Homolog gene—which all animals, including humans, have—scientists spurred an ankle bone in chicken embryos to produce a bone-growing protein.

This resulted in a fibula that kept growing until it was longer and more tube-like, similar to the legs of theropods—the dinosaur ancestors of modern birds.

Birds evolved from theropods more than 145 million years ago, and scientists believe their leg bones changed as their bodies got lighter. But, as Discover puts it, "with one small modification, millions of years of evolution can be undone," showing "echoes of the dinosaurs remain in the DNA of birds today." In addition to showing the genetic link

between dinosaurs and birds, scientists are hoping to explain the genetic changes that occur during evolution.

Last year, the same team grew chicken embryos with dinosaur-like feet. And US scientists were able to do the same for dinosaur-like snouts. (Scientists have finally stopped fighting about what killed the dinosaurs.)

This article originally appeared on Newser: Scientists Grow Chickens With Dinosaur Legs

[Remnant of the Light](#)

[Prophecy in the News](#)