

Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a	Confirmed
☐	☒ The exact sample size (<i>n</i>) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
☒	☐ A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
☒	☐ The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided <i>Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.</i>
☒	☐ A description of all covariates tested
☒	☐ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
☐	☒ A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
☒	☐ For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. <i>F</i> , <i>t</i> , <i>r</i>) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and <i>P</i> value noted <i>Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.</i>
☐	☒ For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
☒	☐ For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
☒	☐ Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's <i>d</i> , Pearson's <i>r</i>), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection	Photographs of IVPP V34427 under normal light were taken using a Nikon D850 Camera. .
Data analysis	Maximum parsimony analyses were performed using the TNT software package (v.1.5). Bayesian tip-dating analysis was conducted using MrBayes (V. 3.2.7b). Phylogenetic comparative analyses were conducted using the R (v 4.0.3). The following R packages are used in this study: paleotree (v. 3.4.4), Claddis (v. 0.6.3), phytools (v. 2.4-4), geomorph (v. 3.1.2), Morpho (v.2.12). Geometric morphometric analyses were conducted using the tpsDIG (v. 2.1). Comparative analyses were conducted using the RStudio (v. 2024.12.1; available at https://docs.posit.co/ide/user/). The R code, MrBayes commands, and raw data used in phylogenetic and morphometric analyses are available at figshare (https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.31228414).

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

The specimens (IVPP V34427) described in this study is archived and available on request from the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China. All data, including the measurements, and phylogenetic data matrix that support the findings of this study are included as Supplementary Information. The R code, MrBayes commands, and raw data used in phylogenetic and morphometric analyses are available at figshare (<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.31228414>).

Research involving human participants, their data, or biological material

Policy information about studies with [human participants or human data](#). See also policy information about [sex, gender \(identity/presentation\), and sexual orientation](#) and [race, ethnicity and racism](#).

Reporting on sex and gender	not applicable
Reporting on race, ethnicity, or other socially relevant groupings	not applicable
Population characteristics	not applicable
Recruitment	not applicable
Ethics oversight	not applicable

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

☐ Life sciences ☐ Behavioural & social sciences ☒ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	Comparative anatomy of one Late Jurassic avialan theropod
Research sample	One fossil specimen
Sampling strategy	No sample size calculation was performed.
Data collection	IVPP V34427 was discovered during our 2024 summer expedition in a new locality that is approximately 4.5 km away from the main excavation site of the Zhenghe Fauna, near Yangyuan Village, Zhenghe County, Nanping City, Fujian Province.
Timing and spatial scale	not applicable
Data exclusions	not applicable
Reproducibility	The specimens (IVPP V34427) described in this study is archived and available on request from the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China. All data, including the measurements, and phylogenetic data matrix that support the findings of this study are included as Supplementary Information. Raw data used in phylogenetic and morphometric analyses is available at figshare
Randomization	not applicable
Blinding	not applicable

Did the study involve field work? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Field work, collection and transport

Field conditions	IVPP V34427 was discovered during our 2024 summer expedition in a new locality that is approximately 4.5 km away from the main excavation site of the Zhenghe Fauna, near Yangyuan Village, Zhenghe County, Nanping City, Fujian Province, Southeast China.
Location	IVPP V34427 was discovered during our 2024 summer expedition in a new locality that is approximately 4.5 km away from the main excavation site of the Zhenghe Fauna, near Yangyuan Village, Zhenghe County, Nanping City, Fujian Province, Southeast China.
Access & import/export	The specimens (IVPP V34427) described in this study is archived and available on request from the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
Disturbance	not applicable

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

Methods

- n/a Involved in the study
- ☒ ☐ Antibodies
- ☒ ☐ Eukaryotic cell lines
- ☐ ☒ Palaeontology and archaeology
- ☒ ☐ Animals and other organisms
- ☒ ☐ Clinical data
- ☒ ☐ Dual use research of concern
- ☒ ☐ Plants

- n/a Involved in the study
- ☒ ☐ ChIP-seq
- ☒ ☐ Flow cytometry
- ☒ ☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Palaeontology and Archaeology

Specimen provenance	IVPP V34427 was discovered during our 2024 summer expedition in a new locality that is approximately 4.5 km away from the main excavation site of the Zhenghe Fauna, near Yangyuan Village, Zhenghe County, Nanping City, Fujian Province.
Specimen deposition	The specimens (IVPP V34427) described in this study is archived and available on request from the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China.
Dating methods	not applicable
☒ Tick this box to confirm that the raw and calibrated dates are available in the paper or in Supplementary Information.	
Ethics oversight	IVPP V34427 discovered during our 2024 summer expedition in a new locality that is approximately 4.5 km away from the main excavation site of the Zhenghe Fauna, near Yangyuan Village, Zhenghe County, Nanping City, Fujian Province, Southeast China.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Plants

Seed stocks	not applicable
Novel plant genotypes	not applicable
Authentication	not applicable