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Quail-thrush birds from the Miocene of northern Australia

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Quail-thrushes (Passeriformes: Cinclosomatidae: *Cinclosoma*) are ground-dwelling corvoid songbirds endemic to Australia and New Guinea. Until now, the only known quail-thrush fossils have been from late Quaternary cave deposits in Australia. A new species of quail-thrush, *Cinclosoma elachum* sp. nov., is described from the early to middle Miocene deposits in the Riversleigh World Heritage Area, Queensland, Australia. A second, larger quail-thrush is identified from the middle Miocene of Riversleigh. The new fossils considerably extend the geographic and temporal ranges of cinclosomatids, and indicate the presence of two species of quail-thrushes in the Miocene of northern Australia, located more than 300 km from the nearest extant member of *Cinclosoma*. These fossils provide a minimum age of ~18 million years for Cinclosomatidae. They cannot be confidently assigned to the crown group of the genus *Cinclosoma*, but can be used to calibrate the split between this genus and *Ptilorrhoa* in molecular dating studies of the Corvides radiation and Passeriformes overall. This material also adds to the growing diversity of songbirds identified from the pre-Pleistocene record of Australia, and reemphasises the global significance of the Riversleigh deposits in developing understanding about the early evolutionary history of passerines.

Key words: Aves, Passeriformes, Cinclosomatidae, *Cinclosoma*, Miocene, Australia, Riversleigh.

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