

Yunxian 2 fossil suggests *Homo sapiens* emerged far earlier than previously believed

A crushed skull unearthed in Hubei Province, China — known as Yunxian 2 — is shaking up scientific assumptions about human origins. Thought to be one million years old, the fossil was digitally reconstructed and analyzed by an international team of researchers. Their findings suggest the skull belongs to an early ancestor of *Homo longi*, a species closely related to Denisovans and modern humans.



This challenges the long-held belief that *Homo sapiens* emerged only 300,000 years ago. If confirmed, the discovery could push back our species' origin by nearly 400,000 years and reveal that Neanderthals, Denisovans, and *Homo sapiens* may have coexisted for up to 800,000 years.

"This fossil may be one of the most important windows into our evolutionary past," said paleoanthropologist Chris Stringer