

# Hesperornis regalis

**Common Name:**  
Cretaceous seabird

**Classification:**  
**Class:** Aves  
**Order:** Hesperornithiformes  
**Family:** Hesperornithidae



Tarso-metatarsal of the seabird *Hesperornis*. Collected from the Cretaceous Pierre Shale by Mike Hanson and Dennis Halvorson, near Cooperstown, Griggs County. Donated by Bev and Orville Tranby. On display at the North Dakota Heritage Center. 85 mm long. North Dakota State Fossil Collection ND95-40.1.



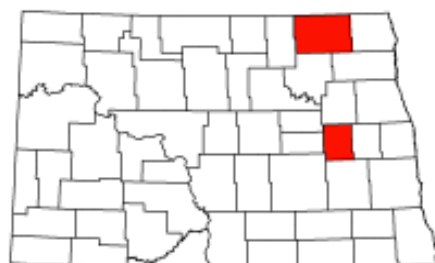
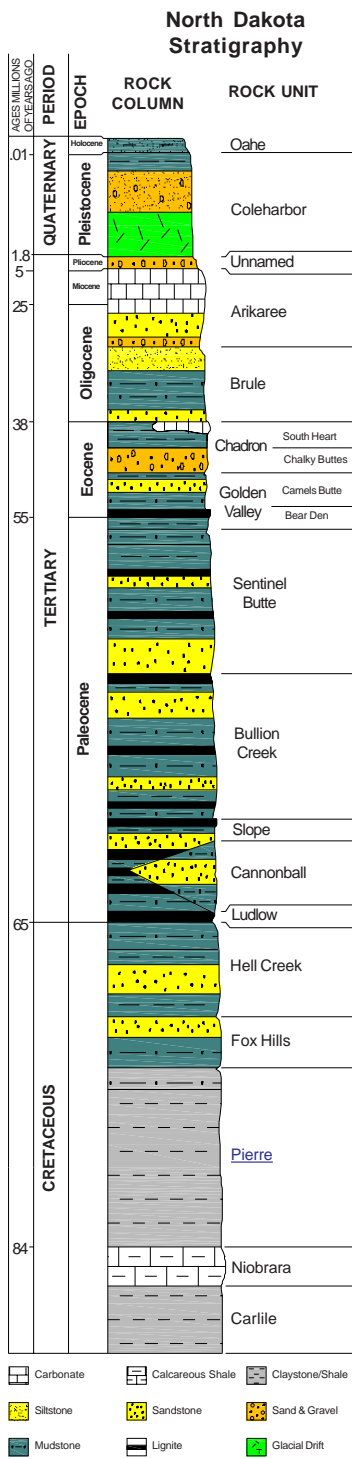
*Hesperornis* skeleton showing position of tarso-metatarsal.

**Description:**

*Hesperornis* was a large, flightless seabird, up to about five feet tall. Although it was incapable of flight, *Hesperornis* was a swift swimmer that could propel itself through the shallow coastal waters of the Pierre Sea with its powerful hind legs and webbed feet. It's webbed feet were similar to a grebe. It's jaws were equipped with sharp, pointed teeth adapted for preying on fish and squids.



The flightless seabird, *Hesperornis*, after catching prey while diving. Painting by, and courtesy of, Dan Varner.



Locations where fossils have been found