



Pterosaurs: Natural History, Evolution, Anatomy

By Mark P. Witton

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For 150 million years, the skies didn't belong to birds--they belonged to the pterosaurs. These flying reptiles, which include the pterodactyls, shared the world with the nonavian dinosaurs until their extinction 65 million years ago. Some pterosaurs, such as the giant azhdarchids, were the largest flying animals of all time, with wingspans exceeding thirty feet and standing heights comparable to modern giraffes. This richly illustrated book takes an unprecedented look at these astonishing creatures, presenting the latest findings on their anatomy, ecology, and extinction.

Pterosaurs features some 200 stunning illustrations, including original paintings by Mark Witton and photos of rarely seen fossils. After decades of mystery, paleontologists have finally begun to understand how pterosaurs are related to other reptiles, how they functioned as living animals, and, despite dwarfing all other flying animals, how they managed to become airborne. Here you can explore the fossil evidence of pterosaur behavior and ecology, learn about the skeletal and soft-tissue anatomy of pterosaurs, and consider the newest theories about their cryptic origins. This one-of-a-kind book covers the discovery history, paleobiogeography, anatomy, and behaviors of more than 130 species of pterosaur, and also discusses their demise at the end of the Mesozoic.

- The most comprehensive book on pterosaurs ever published
- Features some 200 illustrations, including original paintings by the author
- Covers every known species and major group of pterosaurs
- Describes pterosaur anatomy, ecology, behaviors, diversity, and more
- Encourages further study with 500 references to primary pterosaur literature

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Editorial Review

Review

"A comprehensive introduction. . . . Witton manages to make this an attractive book for the layperson and bring these flying fossils to life."--**Natural History**

"Witton's new tribute to pterosaurs gives these fantastic fossil creatures a much-needed makeover in two crucial ways. Not only does the book bring the science of pterosaurs up to date--at long last following-up other classics such as David Unwin's *The Pterosaurs* and Peter Wellnhofer's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Pterosaurs*--but Witton is a highly-skilled and imaginative artist who ably reconstructs the bones of the animals and brings them back to life in startling poses. Witton's pterosaurs are fantastical creatures deserving their own time in the spotlight. . . . Witton's combination of style and substance makes *Pterosaurs* a true treasure and an absolute must for anyone curious about the extinct flyers."--**Brian Switek, National Geographic.com**

"This really is the ultimate guide to pterosaurs, providing us with a richer view of pterosaur diversity and behaviour than allowed in the two previous great volumes on the group (Wellnhofer 1991, Unwin 2005) and containing a substantial amount of review and analysis of pterosaur ecology and functional morphology."--**Darren Naish, Scientific American**

"A solid review of the whole of the Pterosauria that'll be genuinely useful for researchers for many years. I'm sure I'll be typing 'Witton, (2013) stated . . . ' quite a lot in the future and that, if anything, should be a good measure of how I rate this as a scientific text. Now go buy a copy and read it, it really is very good."--**Dave Hone, Pterosaur.Net**

"[Witton] presents the uncertainties of science but never shies away from making his opinion clear. [He] respects the complexities [of scientific writing] without allowing them to clump up the text. . . . I can wholeheartedly recommend the book already."--**David Mass, DRIP**

"*Pterosaurs* would make an excellent addition to any reference collection and especially that of an advanced (adult or young adult) lay-reader."--**Greg Leitich Smith, GSL Blog**

"I can tell you that it is not only a fascinating bit of text, its illustrations will leave you gaping in awestruck amazement."--**John E. Riutta, Well-read Naturalist**

"[Witton] combines his deep knowledge of the subject as a palaeontologist at the University of Portsmouth (U.K.) with his skills as an artist, and he has a flair for informal but accurate writing. His 292-page book is the most comprehensive and authoritative book to come along since Peter Wellnhofer's classic *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Pterosaurs* back in 1991."--**James Gurney, artist and author of the Dinotopia book series**

"The joy of *Pterosaurs* is how it brings long extinct animals to life."--**Jeff Hecht, New Scientist**

"Learn all about flying reptiles in this artfully illustrated overview of pterosaur research."--**Science News**

"Highly recommended."--**EverythingDinosaur.com**

"Once dragons flew through Mesozoic skies! They were pterosaurs, and Witton offers a rich and extensive account of what science knows about these extinct creatures. . . . For those who want an introduction to flying reptiles or the craft of scientific research, this title is a great choice."--**Eileen H. Kramer, *Library Journal***

"Beautifully laid out, clearly written, loaded with handsome illustrations, Witton's book invites you to dip in for delicious tidbits or hunker down for the equivalent of a superb lecture series."--**Wilson's Bookmarks, *Christianity Today***

"This is a book of impeccable scholarship, but it is also very readable for the non-scholar and amateur pterosaurophile. . . . A wonderful book!"--**Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh, *Middleburgh Blog***

"Though the writing style clearly targets the book to nonexperts, it does not dilute its realized value for professional paleontologists or teachers of paleontology. This is a very skillful presentation: a brief introductory paragraph or two leads quickly into an advanced discussion. The illustrations are excellent, including nice reconstructions by the author and very high-quality photographic reproductions of original key fossils. Overall, this is a very well-done book that belongs in any library with a vertebrate paleontology collection."--**Choice**

"Although the text is mostly technical, directed at an informed audience, it is written with a humorous slant. Everyone will get something out of reading this book. . . . This is a fantastic book!"--**Randy Lauff, *Canadian Field Naturalist***

"Witton's *Pterosaurs* is a remarkable visual feast, packed full of novel art as well as excellent photographs that the author clearly worked hard to obtain. There are, in fact, illustrations of some sort on virtually every single page--you will never get bored of looking at this book. . . . If you like or are even vaguely interested in pterosaurs, you really need this book."--**Darren Naish, *Historical Biology***

From the Back Cover

"This book is both academically interesting and truly fun to read. That is a difficult balance to reach, but Witton does an excellent job of it by using a lighthearted, informal writing style in combination with a well-referenced, serious scientific review. An invaluable reference."--**Michael Habib, University of Southern California**

About the Author

Mark P. Witton is a paleontologist in the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Portsmouth. He has served as a technical consultant for "Walking with Dinosaurs 3D" and many other film and television productions. His illustrations of pterosaurs, dinosaurs, and other prehistoric creatures have appeared in numerous publications, including "Science" and newspapers around the world.

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Daryl Steele:

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Margie Rodriguez:

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