

Pterosaurs and Woodpeckers in Cuba

Dale A. Drinnon used to attribute pterosaur sightings to Manta rays jumping out of the water. Perhaps he later came to realize that most sightings are not over water. More recently, he has thrown up woodpeckers, including extinct ones at that, as a plausible explanation. In April of 2012, he suggested such birds as the cause of two sightings in Cuba many years ago. His post is titled "Cuban Pterosaurs?"



Sketch by the eyewitness Patty Carson: 1965 sighting in Cuba

Drinnon said:

The mixed-trait Pterosaurs do not exist in Paleontology but they DO occur commonly in popular cartoons such as The Flintstones in the 1960s. Therefore the assumption [sic] that such creatures ever existed as such in real life is born in a pre-conceived notion out of such representations as the Flintstones cartoon and born out of ignorance.

To the best of my memory, most of the flying things in the old Flintstones cartoons were feathered birds, not pterosaurs, so that reference is irrelevant, even if Drinnon did show some reason that eyewitnesses were influenced by cartoons from the 1960's. He does not, however, show any evidence for any such influence.

Drinnon mentions "ignorance," as if that explains something about what eyewitnesses describe. But that critic does not openly say anything about any hoax. I say that Drinnon himself is not as knowledgeable as he needs to be on the subject of pterosaur fossils. He should have done more research before making the statements he made.

He said, "Basically Pterosaurs came in two large groups," but he went on to generalize that all of one group had head crests and all of the other group had long tails. He thinks that there is no mixture of those traits in any of the fossils. That is wrong. There were at least a small number of basal pterosaurs that had head crests, and basal pterosaurs are the ones that had long tails.

Drinnon also may be ignorant of recent discoveries in paleontology, in particular regarding head crests in some pterosaurs. At least some of those head crests grew as the creatures aged, meaning larger pterosaurs had head crests that might not have been noticeable in smaller ones of the same

species. Drinnon does not take that into consideration regarding modern sightings.

He also seems to be under the assumption that no pterosaur could ever have existed unless it closely resembled a fossil that somebody has discovered up until the present. That kind of thinking would result in a future pterosaur fossil being rejected as a hoax just because of its being different from any previously known fossil.



Sketch by eyewitness Eskin C. Kuhn: 1971 sighting in Cuba

Drinnon says that the above sketch by Mr. Kuhn came from an encounter with two ivory-billed woodpeckers. Drinnon says that Kuhn was "startled and the sighting was brief." Where does the critic get those ideas about the eyewitness being startled and the sighting being brief? The critic probably knows nothing about the Whitcomb-Kuhn interview in which the eyewitness said the following:

I really tried to "cram" my study at that time, focusing on details as well as taking in the overall form and motion of the pair in flight. I tried to memorize the details that would enable me to commit them to paper in a sketch so as to accurately define the creature. Some of the things that I focused on were the bony vertebrae of the back that were clearly defined . . .

That does not sound at all like a brief sighting or a misunderstanding that came from being startled. In fact, I don't recall anything in Kuhn's writings that he was startled at any time during the sighting of the two "pterodactyls." Like most eyewitnesses, he was surprised at the details that he saw, but that is the opposite of what Drinnon talks about. Kuhn was surprised by the strange features of what he saw, he was not imagining things because of a surprise. Drinnon turns things upside down with his faulty reasoning.

Perching Pterosaur, not Woodpecker

Dale A. Drinnon has another explanation for pterosaur sightings in Southern California. He now says it's a woodpecker.

Two Pterosaur Sightings in Cuba

A lady living in California, has come forward, supporting the U.S. Marine's testimony with her own sighting report. Patty Carson observed a single pterosaur, about six years before the sighting by Kuhn.