

Perching Pterosaur, not Woodpecker

Dale A. Drinnon has another explanation for pterosaur sightings in Southern California. He now says it's a woodpecker. In his blog post "Living Pterosaurs of Hollywood," he says:

This sounds like possibly another series of sightings of an outsized woodpecker similar to the Ivory-billed woodpecker, already suspected from "Pteranodon" sightings from further North in California and in Oregon. There is a larger species related to the Ivory-Billed woodpecker native to Mexico but it is thought to be extinct. The creature which is reported as a pterosaur perches upright, which no kind of a pterosaur could do.

I'd better explain the context. Drinnon says that after what looks like a quote, but I haven't been able to find the source, after I Googled on his text. Maybe he was quoting correctly. If he did, with "Jonathan David Whitcomb states on Facebook" then I accept that is what was written on Facebook. It relates to the May 13th sighting this year, a little southeast of Griffith Park. The animal was called a pterosaur by the eyewitness and she said that it had no feathers but it did have a head crest.

Here are some problems with what Drinnon has said:

- He said "perching" but the May 13th sighting had a "pterosaur" flying over a freeway. It did not perch.
- He said no kind of pterosaur can perch but the kind that is often reported in Southern California looks like a member of Rhamphornynchoidea, which could perch.
- He said a woodpecker could be what is being seen, but almost all sightings are of much larger flying

creatures, far bigger than any woodpecker.

- He said sightings in Southern California are related to “Pteranodon sightings” further north in California and in Oregon but he does not say why those might be related to sightings in Southern California.
- He thinks the head crest mentioned by the May 13th eyewitness is the same thing as what some woodpeckers have, but she chose only pterosaur images from a survey. Drinnon says nothing about that survey.
- He thinks none of the eyewitnesses are capable of determining that they had seen flying creatures that were not birds. Why does Drinnon think he can judge all those persons when his own judgment has not been sufficiently proven? Has he even questioned any eyewitness of a strange flying creature?

Does a Pterosaur Perch?

It could be that Drinnon was thinking about the Lakewood, California, sighting that happened last June, in 2012. The eyewitness said that the “dragon-pterodactyl” was perched on a telephone cable just a little overhead. But she also described a long tail with a “triangle” at tail end, as I recall. That would make it the type of pterosaur that had digits on the feet that could perch, for that would be a basal pterosaur.

Dragons or Pterosaurs Over Interstate-5

Right between the Los Angeles River and Griffith Park—that’s where the three “dragons” were flying on March 3, 2013, at 6:10 a.m., but another driver on the I-5 Freeway saw one “pterosaur” ten weeks later, just a little over a mile south of the first sighting location.

California Ropens – Are They Woodpeckers?

Immediately after mentioning the woodpecker interpretation of pterosaur sightings in California, the skeptic said, “The

creature which is reported as a pterosaur perches upright, which no kind of a pterosaur could do." Well, that old generalization no longer applies, for we now know that one type of pterosaur could indeed perch upright, and that long-tailed variety just happens to be . . . yes, the same general type observed perching upright on a telephone line in Lakewood, California, on June 19, 2012: the long-tailed variety.