

Ropen Q & A – Modern Pterosaur

Questions and Answers About the Ropen

I just got an email from a reader of my digital nonfiction book *Live Pterosaurs in Australia and in Papua New Guinea*. The man's questions deserve answers but for everybody, not just this one reader.

Q: In your ebook, the Ropen is almost always described consistently throughout witness testimonies. Are there variations across the region (for example, different behavior, coloration, etc.)?

A: The reader probably refers to the southwest Pacific, including Australia and Papua New Guinea. Even within that geographic area, how deep is this question! We do not yet have enough eyewitness reports to determine variations of species of the long-tailed featherless flying creatures that we call "ropen." The Perth creature may be a different species than the ones observed by Duane Hodgkinson (1944) and by Gideon Koro (~1994), based upon the apparent differences in ratios between wingspan and length of tail (as well as beak-to-tail-end length), but even that is uncertain; different eyewitnesses have different abilities in estimating sizes, even if they all had the same perspective on the flying creatures. Even the capture of several flying creatures would be only the beginning in answering this broad question.

Q: Is it possible that Ropen present sexual dimorphism (color variation between genders, males possessing larger crests/tail diamonds, etc.)?

A: Another difficult question. This may take many years to answer adequately, for we need many detailed photographs and videos, even after we obtain captures animals.

Q: Have [ropens] ever been observed interacting with other animals?

A: This is easier, at least for those few reports that include observations of potential ropens that are catching (or trying to catch) prey. Yet many of these are in North America rather than in Australia or in Papua New Guinea. Many of those reports suggest at least some ropens in North America hunt birds. See the appendix of the most recent edition of *Searching for Ropens and Finding God*.

Q: Are there accounts of [Ropens] attacking humans?

A: Some areas of the earth have reports of attacks on people, including a valley in British Columbia (Canada) and in Papua New Guinea. I suspect that most of the real attacks have been from rogue ropens, a few creatures that were suffering from something that prevented them from obtaining normal prey.

We should define "attack" here. I leave out those cases in which an apparent pterosaur may have stopped a potential attack after discovering that the intended prey was human. This appears to have been the case with a teenager in Virginia (late 20th century) who encountered a huge flying creature that stopped its predatory dive about twenty feet short of the girl; that was in the dark of night, except for the moon light.

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Ropen Eyewitness Interview

In this Youtube video, Garth Guessman interviews the World War II veteran Duane Hodgkinson, who witnessed a huge ropen take off into the air in 1944 in New Guinea.

Ropen of Papua New Guinea

“Several Americans have investigated reports of what natives of Umboi Island call ‘ropen,’ including three pioneers. Jim Blume, a missionary in Papua New Guinea for decades, interviewed dozens of native eyewitnesses of pterosaur-like creatures. . . .”

Rhamphorhynchoid Ropen

Around 1965, Patty Carson saw a similar creature at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. She drew a sketch of the featherless

long-tailed "dinosaur." A few years after her sighting, the U.S. Marine Eskin Kuhn saw two "pterodactyls" flying in from the sea at Guantanamo Bay.

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