

Sighting at Umboi Island, 2009

On the southern coast of Umboi Island, Papua New Guinea, a bay shelters Opai Beach, the same beach where Paul Nation and Jonathan Whitcomb disembarked from banana boats in their respective 2002 and 2004 expeditions. Near the southeast edge of the bay is a government station called "Bunsil."



From about 1993 through late 2004, at least five living-pterosaur expeditions, on Umboi Island, were led by Americans. In this part of Papua New Guinea, many natives call the giant nocturnal flying creature "*ropen*." There is no mistaking it for the nocturnal flying fox fruit bat, for the *ropen* glows, for several seconds at a time, with what some researchers believe is intrinsic bioluminescence.

Rex Yapi is an accounting student at the University of Technology in Lae, Papua New Guinea. Around July of 2009, he was on a banana boat in Bunsil Bay, Umboi. Those on the boat became alarmed at a large creature that was mostly under water but approaching them. They stopped the boat as the creature passed, for apparently it was catching fish or something. Only the tail of the creature was above water, but what a tail! Rex estimated the length at six or seven meters, with a "diamond shape," which may refer to a *Rhamphorhynchoid* tail flange.

It was obvious to the university student that they had observed the *ropen*. When Rex was able to obtain the use of a computer, he emailed the American researcher Jonathan Whitcomb and reported the incident, including his feelings about it. He said, "it was a frightening scene."