

# Big Flying Creature in Utah

A newspaper article was published in Salt Lake City, about a century ago, reporting a huge flying creature described as half-bird and half-reptile. How big was it? The image coming with that article showed a dragon flying off with a horse in its mouth. Where was that flying thing flying? Over Stansbury Island, which is in the Great Salt Lake of Utah.

Three children, including Devon Roberts and his brother Dallin, saw something huge flying overhead, at about 11 p.m., around the fall of 2001, something very unlike any bird. Devon estimated the flying creature had a wingspan of fifteen to twenty feet, although that estimate depends on his estimate of the distance. Where was that flying thing flying? Over Grantsville, which is just south of the Great Salt Lake.

Was it an over-imaginative newspaper reporter a century ago and three over-imaginative children fourteen years ago, with no relationship between the stories? Maybe . . . but maybe not. I suggest both stories may have had some truth, with more credibility for the recent sighting, for two of those three eyewitnesses (sighting around the fall of 2001) I myself interviewed face-to-face, and those two young men appeared perfectly credible to me. I also suggest the two young men did, in fact, observe a very large bioluminescent flying creature and the best candidate for that kind of animal is the ropen.



Devon Roberts was interviewed, in 2015, by Jonathan Whitcomb

I recently interviewed Devon and Dallin Roberts, of St. George, Utah, concerning the flying creature they witnessed, when they were children, in the farming town of Grantsville. The point of this investigation of that encounter fourteen years ago is not to promote belief in a dragon that carried away a full-grown horse and flew over the Great Salt Lake a century ago, but to promote an open mind to the possibility that something much larger than any classified bird now flies over North America, including northern Utah.

Some of the sighting reports in the United States suggest the larger ones, the creatures that resemble pterosaurs, may be able to lift much more weight than eagles or owls can, for the wingspans of the apparent ropens are much greater. But let's now concentrate on the sighting in Grantsville.

### **Sighting in Grantsville, Utah**

Twelve-year-old Dallin was the first of the three boys to see the strange thing that was flying overhead that night. None of those boys could see it well enough to say it was a half-bird and half-reptile, as an earlier generation may (or may not) have seen in that area of Utah, for the more-recent encounter

was late at night. How did they see the creature? It was glowing, although the light went off and on over a period of minutes.

At first, Devon thought his brother was playing a joke. Dallin was telling him there was a huge bird that was “on fire” and then it disappeared. Sure! But then Devon saw the glowing creature. It was no joke but real, seeming to disappear when the glow stopped.

So how could the recent sighting relate to the old story of a horse-carrying dragon-like thing? When the flying creature in 2001 turned on its glow, the farm animals under its flight path “started going berserk” (words of Devon Roberts). Those animals felt threatened, even if the flying creature was not large enough to carry away a horse.

Perhaps the old report included an exaggeration and a false detail about a horse, but that does not mean that all aspects of that old newspaper story were only fictional. Regardless of how truthful that horse-eating story was, the three boys in Grantsville, in 2001, saw something other eyewitnesses have seen in North America: a strange flying creature that glows when it flies at night, an animal much bigger than any bird in a science textbook.

###

.

## **Ropen Bioluminescence in Utah**

*Three boys were playing at night on a playground in the farming community of Grantsville, Utah, around the fall of 2001, when they were shocked at the appearance of a large glowing creature that flew overhead.*

## **Van Meter Flying Creature**

*If the town of Van Meter, Iowa, stood alone with a series of sightings in the early 20th century, what about recent sightings? What about reported encounters with pterosaur-like animals in recent times, in the neighboring states of Wisconsin and Missouri? I doubt that Van Meter really stands alone.*

## **Author in Utah Reports Flying Creatures**

*Do you believe in the possibility that long-tailed featherless flying creatures, much larger than any fruit bat, live in the jungles of Papua New Guinea? Your belief depends a great deal on where you lived your childhood: in a village like Gomlongon on Umboi Island or in a western country like the United States.*

## **Are Modern Pterosaurs Bioluminescent?**

*I suggest, to anyone who would attempt to explain pterosaur bioluminescence to a skeptic, that we begin with reports of large flying creatures known to some of the natives of Papua New Guinea, creatures that glow as they fly.*

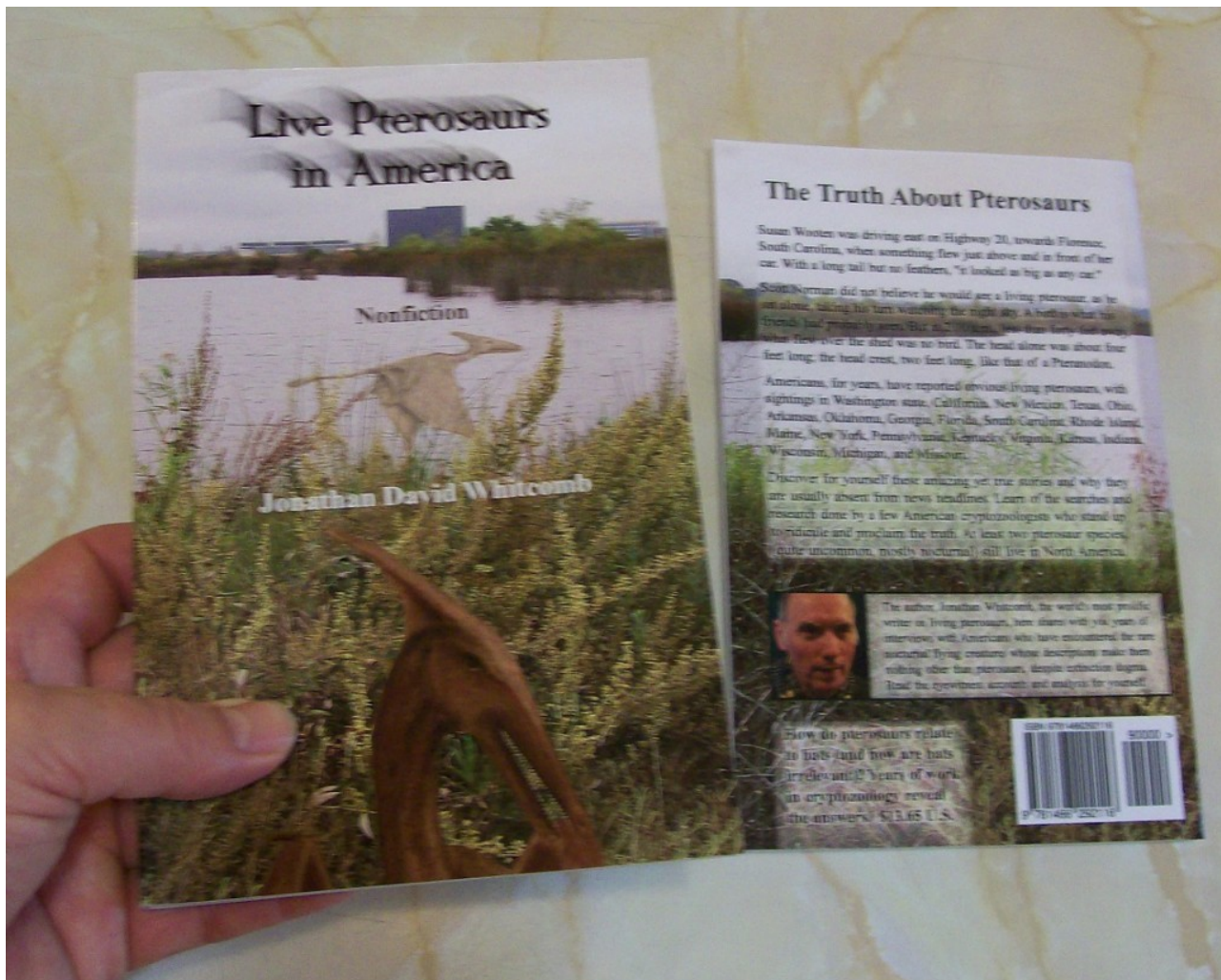
## **Bioluminescence in Pterosaurs**

*I interviewed Paul Nation in his home in Texas, soon after he had returned to the United States from his late-2006 expedition in Papua New Guinea. . . . Jacob Kepas, his interpreter, was able to climb up a cliff where he and a local native saw what appeared to be a giant winged creature sleeping on another cliff.*

## **Ropen Pterosaur**

*The word “ropen” comes from Umboi Island, Papua New Guinea, where in the local language of Kovai it refers to a large nocturnal flying creature that briefly, on occasion on some*

nights, glows brightly.



Nonfiction paperback: *Live Pterosaurs in America* – by J. D. Whitcomb

From a reader in Wisconsin:

“. . . there is something here for everyone . . . Once you start to reading it you won't want to put it down . . . amazing and awe inspiring . . . Out of five stars, I'll give it all five." (From Isaac Elekom)