

Validity of Sightings at Night

A recent post on the “Live Pterosaur” blog was about the credibility of sightings at night. I will not quote much of that post here, but I would like to add more ammunition, more eyewitness sightings.

Two Eyewitnesses See Two Pterosaurs in Florida

According to the nonfiction book Live Pterosaurs in America, a man in Florida saw, in 2008, at about 2:30 a.m., two small pterosaurs flying over houses in the neighborhood. The man’s friend also saw the creatures that had no feathers, a pointed beak, and a “long pointed thing protruding from the back of its head.”

What is not mentioned in that post is that the first flying creature was illuminated by a flood light, making it clearly visible at a close distance.

“Pterodactyl Attacks”

Regarding the report mentioned in the above link, why believe that modern pterosaurs were involved in these attacks? For one thing, birds and bats don’t usually attack people at night. For another, the pterosaurs that attack people in British Columbia do not always kill people. Some victims survive to tell other people about the attacks. The closeness of the encounters, involving attacks, goes without saying, and closeness means the person being attacked gets a close view of the attacker.

San Antonio, Texas, Pterosaur at Night

I quote from the book Live Pterosaurs in America:

“One evening, I was outside my apartment building . . . talking to my brother. . . . We were very used to the normal nightly activities of the area. We knew what the local birds and bats looked like . . . My dad and I had, on several occasions, noticed bats flying right near our heads . . . Neither my brother or I was prone to being scared by anything outside at night. This night was different. We noticed something flying around across the road from where we were . . . the creature was flying just above the phone lines. It would go one direction, turn, and swoop back. The shape was wrong for any large bird of the area, and the size was much too large to be any bat I have ever seen (I have seen a flying fox in a zoo, too, once with wings spread). The wingspan was huge, anywhere from 6-10 feet across. We watched the thing for maybe twenty minutes or so . . .

This sighting in San Antonio is important, for two eyewitnesses, familiar with local birds and bats, realized that a flying creature was too much unlike any bird or bat. I sense that this sighting may not have as high a credibility as other sightings at night, but should be considered more than zero credibility, when taken in context with the many other sightings of modern pterosaurs, in Texas and out, in the night and in the daytime.

Flying Creature of the Night

I recall part of a comment from a critic, some years ago, ridiculing the credibility of eyewitnesses who “misidentify” birds or bats at night. But he was only tossing out a generalization, assuming that all reported sightings (those encounters that serious investigators publicize) all fit neatly into his mental image of a dark landscape where people imagine that birds and bats are pterosaurs. Science thrives on details of human experience, so let’s examine particular sightings.

The above blog post mentions night sightings in Sudan, Africa, in San Diego, California, and in Ohio. More could be said about more sightings in other areas of the world.