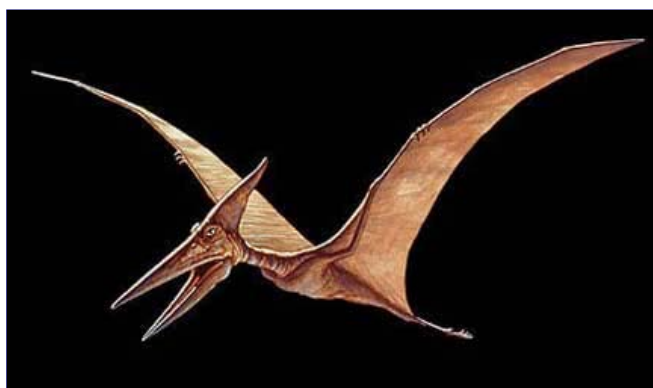




Part 2: Pennsylvania High Strangeness - "Thunderbird" Sightings

© 2008 by Linda Moulton Howe

"The huge flying creature had a long beak and pointed head that swept back from the beak. ...The wings appeared to be a membrane stretched over bone." - May 2008 eyewitness south of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Pteranodon, Greek for "wing" and "toothless," was a flying reptile from the Late Cretaceous 89.3 to 70.6 million years ago, ranging in North America over Kansas, Alabama, Nebraska, Wyoming, and South Dakota. The Pteranodon was one of the largest pterosaur genera, with a wingspan of 30 feet (9 meters).

Illustration © 1996 by Joe Tucciarone and Jeff Poling.

Earthfiles, news category.

Return to **Part 1**

October 12, 2008 Greensburg, Pennsylvania - Six years ago in October 2002, Earthfiles reported "What Is the Huge Bird Flying Over Manokotak, Alaska?" [See: **102102 Earthfiles.**] Several dozen Manokotak and Dillingham, Alaska, residents and local pilots reported a very large, dark-colored bird soaring in the sky with a wing span estimated up to 14 feet. Could it have been an unusually large Andean or California Condor? Their wingspreads average up to 9 to 10 ft.

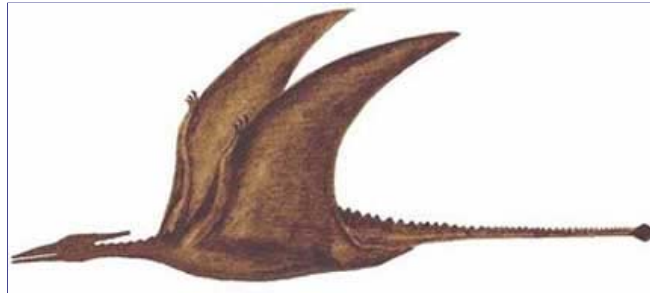
[Editor's Note: *Wikipedia* - "Fossils from the Pleistocene era have been found in various parts of North America, including New York and Florida, leading scientists to believe that California Condors or their ancestors once lived on the west coast of North America as well as all the way to the eastern coast. Some scientists also believe that an ancient relative of the California Condor, *Argentavis magnificens* from South America, may have been the largest flying bird with a wingspan of 23 feet (7 meters)."]



Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*) at Cruz del Cóndor

in Colca Canyon, Colca Valley, Peru. Wingspreads average 9 to 10 feet.
April 2006 digital photo taken by Colegota.

From 1994 through 2004, videographer Jonathan Whitcomb put together a team to explore Umboi Island in Papua New Guinea north of Queensland, Australia, where locals have reported at night seeing a large, flying creature. The composite drawing below from native descriptions resembles a long-tailed pterosaur, from the Greek “winged lizard,” also referred to as pterodactyls from the Greek “winged finger.” Umboi Island people call the nocturnal aerial creatures “ropen.”



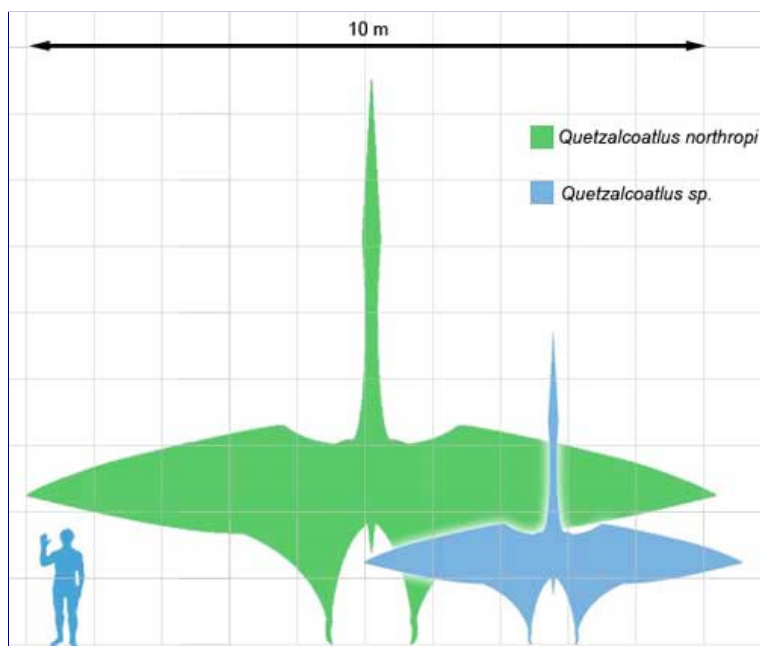
Composite drawing of a “ropen” based on 1994 through 2004 eyewitness testimonies of people in Umboi Island, Papua New Guinea collected by Garth Guessman and Jonathan Whitcomb.

Pterosaurs were not dinosaurs, but existed at the same time of the dinosaurs from the late Triassic to the end of the Cretaceous Period around 220 to 65.5 million years ago. Pterosaurs were the first vertebrates to evolve into aerial flight with wings made largely from skin membrane and muscle. The largest was Quetzalcoatlus, a toothless pterosaur with a very long, stiff neck and wingspans estimated to 33 feet (10 meters) that lived during the Late Cretaceous.



Illustration of *Quetzalcoatlus*, Late Cretaceous, 100 to 65 million years ago.

The global climate was warmer and dinosaurs thrived, but the flying pterosaurs that were not dinosaurs gradually were replaced by feathered birds.



Size comparison of the azhdarchid pterosaurs *Quetzalcoatlus northropi*

Sumerian Thunderbirds

Anzu-bird is an ancient Mesopotamian Thunderbird whose Sumerian name means “heavy rain” or “slingshot.” The Thunderbird once tried to steal the cultural powers from Enki, an Annunaki ruler-god in Mesopotamia.



Anzu, or Sumerian “Thunderbird,” is often depicted with large wings. This 2500 B. C. modern clay impression comes from a cylinder seal in which second from right is Enki (Ea), the God of Wisdom and Water. [Akkadian or Babylonian name in parenthesis.] The stylized streams of water with fish in them flow from his sides. Enki is most widely depicted as a kind of goat-fish, so the fact that he wears horns (also a sign of divinity) and is surrounded by fish is another clue that this is Enki. In the ancient Sumerian language, water is also synonymous with semen. Rising low in the scene from between the stylized mountains is Utu (Shamash), the God of the Sun, with rays of light coming behind him. He carries a knife, possibly to fight off what appears to be Anzu, (“Thunderbird”) depicted with wings. The small tree next to Anzu could be a representation of the Tree of Life from the story of the Huluppu Tree. Samuel Kramer suggests that the figure on the left is Gilgamesh with his bow. All of the gods wear horned helmets, signifying divinity.

Source: **Georgetown University.**



A Mesopotamian stone carving that depicts a Sumerian Bird-Man humanoid interacting with the Tree of Life.

From Sumerian Gods and Goddesses:

“The Annunaki are sometimes depicted as humanoid. At other times they are bird-headed with wings. Often they are Reptilian in appearance, especially when depicted as warriors. Sometimes they are shown as a combination of several types of entities as they all follow the same patterns that repeat in

cycles or loops called Time. The patterns of their battles reflect reality as duality and the same characters play different roles.”

“Thunderbirds” in North America

“...the fourth Thunderbird was a blue sphere having neither eyes nor ears.”

Large bird-like humanoids known as “Thunderbirds” came up during the 2007 investigation of a large, 9-circle wheat formation in Madisonville, Tennessee, first reported by a pilot on May 15, 2007. [See: **060707 Earthfiles.**]

Some visitors to the formation said the surrounding hills, known as The Knobs, were famous for unusual lights and a phenomenon known locally as the “Bird Man.” Local Editor and Co-Owner of the *Monroe County Buzz* newspaper, Mark Boring, said about thirty-five eyewitnesses have seen the Bird Man. The most recent encounter was in 1975, only a few hundred yards away from where the May 2007 wheat formation occurred. That last eyewitness reported the Bird Man was about 7.5 feet tall with the body of a man and wings like a bird and had the head of a man, but a beak like a bird. In one eyewitness case, a person actually shot at the Bird Man. The Cherokee referred to themselves as “Friends of the Thunderbird.”

The 1978 *American Folklore and Legend* by Reader's Digest states, “The Sioux described four varieties of Thunderbird. One was black; another was yellow; a third was scarlet with enormous wings; and the fourth Thunderbird was a blue sphere having neither eyes nor ears. From where its eyes would have been, there shot two diverging zigzags of lightning. The Thunderers were cruel and destructive, forever on the warpath. From them, the Sioux received their spears, tomahawks, and their war paints - which if properly applied protected them from the weapons of their enemies. To dream of the Thunderbirds meant one must go to war. Mortal hatred existed between Thunderbirds and water monsters.”

Pennsylvania “Thunderbird” Sightings

Part 2 of Interview:

Stan Gordon, UFO and Cryptozoology Investigator and Video Producer, *UFO Crash Kecksburg: The Untold Story*, Greensburg, Pennsylvania: “I’ve been involved in cryptozoology for a long time and I’ve investigated lots of unusual creature sightings and lots of Bigfoot sightings here in Pennsylvania over the years. And the Thunderbird reports are very intriguing. Pennsylvania has had a long history of these very large birds with a huge wing span. Some of these reports that have been coming in are daylight sightings at extremely close range.

The area up in the northern part of Pennsylvania up in the Black Forest region, now known as has had a history of these giant bird sightings for years. Now in the past ten years or so, people seem to be seeing more of them there and in other parts of Pennsylvania. And in the last couple of years, some very significant reports have been coming in and throughout the United States as well.



Cook Forest State Park is a 8,500-acre Pennsylvania State Park of heavy woods and mountains along the Clarion River northeast of Pittsburgh (red circle). It was once called the “Black Forest” because of its luxurious growth of evergreen trees.

One case happened in neighboring West Virginia. This was late September or October 2007. I interviewed the fellow a number of times who had been driving at 8 AM outside Clendenin, West Virginia, about 120 miles southwest of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.



Clendenin, West Virginia, is marked by red circle in lower left corner, about 120 miles southwest of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

The eyewitness was riding down a back road when he suddenly had to hit his brakes hard. Right in the middle of the road only a few yards ahead of him was a giant bird feeding on some type of road kill, which the eyewitness believed was an opossum. The witness says he was stunned by the size of the huge flying creature because it stood at least 4-feet-tall. Its head was above the roof line of his car! The head was very dominant, but not out of proportion to its huge body. The neck was long and somewhat crooked. The huge bird was covered with very dark brown or black feathers. But the head had *no feathers* and was separated from the rest of the body by a prominent yellow-orange color. The beak was very long and large and he thought it was a dark, or black, color. The eyes were very dark.

He said that the legs were fully feathered down to its feet. The chest was very well formed, but what was most outstanding was the massive wingspan. He went to the scene afterward and measured the wingspan based on his estimate that the huge bird's wings took up the whole 2-lane roadway, which he measured at 21 feet across.

You've got to remember that he was very close to this thing and as it moved its wings, the gravel and dust on both sides of the road was stirred up. He said the whole thing was amazing and that the wings appeared to have human arms attached. The creature had shoulders and a very muscular torso and the wings were somehow attached to its arms. At one point, the huge bird-like creature looked back at him in his car and gazed right at him. Then, he said, the huge bird turned away and in an awkward manner ran from the car to fly away. But it was more like a jumping or hopping motion trying to get off the ground. The creature moved about five yards and then the 'absolutely huge wing span lifted up into the air.' The wings caused dirt and dust to fly on both sides of the road as it ran to become airborne.

The eyewitness told me, 'I was probably in a state of shock. I'm a hunter. I know birds. I've never seen anything like it before.'

Washington County, Pennsylvania

Then, not too far away as the crow flies, I had another Thunderbird report from a man in Washington County, Pennsylvania, which is not that far away from the West Virginia border. This was in June 2007, so only about three or four months earlier. This gentleman is an educated person who was cutting his grass in the afternoon of a nice sunny day. He sees a creature flying from the north northeast direction only about 20 to 30 feet above his home.

He said as he looked up at the thing in the sky, his first thought was, 'It looks like a Pterodactyl.' We've heard that same description from other people. He said the body was about four to six feet long with a wing span at least *three times larger* than that. He told me he was familiar with all the animals in the area and he said the huge flying creature had a long beak and pointed head that swept back from the beak. The witness was close enough to see its dark eyes and that the neck was long and thin. The wings were large and seemed joined to the legs about half way to the feet. The wings flapped as it flew in a straight line going in a north northeast direction. He only told his wife about it and was very reluctant to tell anyone else because he didn't think he would be believed.

Then more recently, in May 2008, not far from that same Washington County area at 2 PM, was another case. This was investigated by a colleague of mine, Jim Brown, from Fayette County. This was on a highway two miles north of U. S. Route 40 from the southbound lanes of Pennsylvania Route 43. This eyewitness was driving down the 4-lane road. Brownsville and California – those little towns south of Pittsburgh were on his left across the Monongahela River.



Monongahela River right before entering downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Further south on the river are California and Brownsville marked
in small red circles on map below.



California and Brownsville, Pennsylvania, are along the Monongahela River south of Pittsburgh in Washington County. Not far away is Fayette County, long known for high strangeness events in Pennsylvania.

“As he is traveling down the road, this fellow sees an object in the sky that at first he thought was a small aircraft. As he watches, he realizes the wings are moving. He pulls off to the side of the road to get a better look and this large object is coming down and he realizes it’s a big bird about 100 feet overhead at that point. It was gliding, getting lower, looking more like a giant bat than a bird. He said he could not see feathers, but there was short, grey or black hair on the body. The wings appeared to be a membrane stretched over bone. The witness said it was difficult to see details because the sky was so bright (2 PM), but he said there was a small amount of light that could be seen through the membrane. He emphasized, the wings were not like solid metal. This was some kind of living animal. He said other motorists were beginning to slow down and pull off the road. The witness said he watched a man down the road get out of his car with a camera and was taking pictures of it. We don’t know who that was.

At some point as the witnesses were watching, this flying creature glided down to no more than 20 feet above the road surface and was seen flapping its wings once or twice. He said that with each wing flap, the creature appeared to rise about 20 feet higher above the roadway. Then it finally went over the trees and went out of sight.

SO FAR, HAS ANYONE SUBMITTED ANY PHOTOS OF THE GIANT ‘THUNDERBIRDS’ TO YOU?

No, they have not.

FROM YOUR OWN STUDIES OF CRYPTOZOOLOGY, WHAT IS YOUR OWN OPINION ABOUT THE THUNDERBIRD OF ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA AND THESE MODERN REPORTS FROM MEXICO, SOUTH AMERICA AND PENNSYLVANIA?

I don’t know how to compare modern reports with the very historic. What I do know is that I have been getting a lot of reports in the past two to three years and some are at very close range and some of them multiple witness reports. Many of them say the same thing: ‘I hate to say it, but it looks like a pterodactyl.’”

Stan Gordon's Pennsylvania Hotline: **724-838-7768**

Stan Gordon's Website: <http://www.stangordonufo.com>

Stan Gordon's Email: paufo@comcast.net

Return to **Part 1**

More Information:

I also welcome reports of such Thunderbird or other unusual creature sightings. Please email earthfiles@earthfiles.com.

For further reports about the ancient dinosaurs and modern strange creature sightings, please see reports below in the **Earthfiles Archive**:

- 10/10/2008 — Part 1: Two Pennsylvania Hunters Encountered Strange Lights and Lime Green, Glowing Humanoid on Oct. 4
 - 06/08/2007 — Part 3: U. S. Crop Formations, Wheat Pictogram in Madisonville, Tennessee
 - 05/07/2005 — Did Milky Way Gas and Dust Turn Earth Into Icy Snowball Four Times?
 - 04/20/2005 — Outer Space Impact At Serpent Mound, Ohio, 256 Million Years Ago
 - 04/01/2005 — Soft Tissue - Even Blood Cells? - Found in Tyrannosaurus rex Leg Bone
 - 10/22/2002 — What Is the Huge Bird Flying Over Manokotak, Alaska?
 - 03/09/2002 — Dinosaur Feathers - Even On Tyrannosaurus rex?
 - 01/07/2001 — Dinosaur-Killing Asteroid Punched 22 Miles Through Earth's Entire Crust
 - 04/30/2000 — A Dinosaur with A Warm-Blooded Heart
-

Websites:

Cryptozoology.com: <http://www.cryptozoology.com/cryptids/ropen.php>

Thunder Bird History: <http://www.thothweb.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4315>

Credits

**Copyright © 1999 - 2009 by Linda Moulton Howe.
All Rights Reserved.
www.earthfiles.com
earthfiles@earthfiles.com**

Republication and redissemination of the contents of this screen or any part of this website are expressly prohibited without prior Earthfiles.com written consent.

**Privacy Policy | Terms & Conditions
Refund Policy**

**Copyright © 1999 - 2009, Earthfiles.com / DigitalEyeCandy.ca
All rights reserved.**