

Cretaceous Period – 144 to 65 million years ago

PTERANODON

(teh-RANN-oh-don)



Pteranodon was a gigantic flying lizard that lived during the last era of the dinosaur. *Pteranodon* is actually a **pterosaur** (TER-oh-sawr) and not a dinosaur. Pterosaurs are related to dinosaurs, but they are not the same. One significant difference is that dinosaurs did not fly, whereas pterosaurs did. This meant a difference in their body shapes, sizes, and weights. *Pteranodon* was large, but weighed very little. Even though it had a wingspan of up to 30 feet and stood 6 feet tall, *Pteranodon* only weighed about 35 pounds!

Because it weighed so little, *Pteranodon* was great at flying. Its bones were actually hollow. It also had large bony crests on its head, which may have helped it balance while flying. *Pteranodon* had a long fourth finger that stretched over the top of its wings. It also had very good eyesight and a large brain.

Although *Pteranodon* had no teeth, it was a **carnivore**. *Pteranodon* mostly ate fish, which it probably caught by scooping them out of the water. This is how modern-day birds, such as pelicans, hunt. *Pteranodon* fossils have been found in different places around the globe.