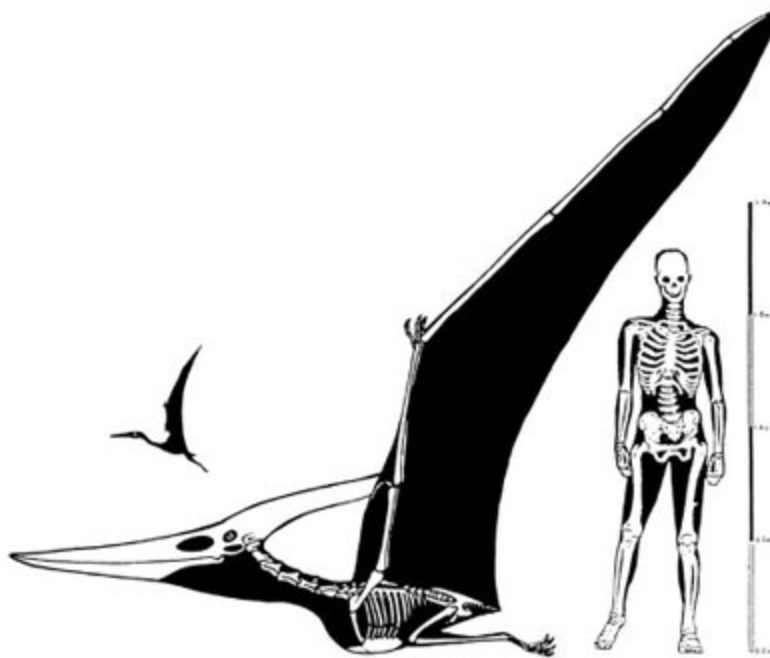


How big was a pterodactyl?

There were several species of pterodactyl. The most common is *Pterodactylus kochi*, which had a wingspan of 50 centimeters— about equal to that of a sparrow hawk. The pterodactyl footprints that were found near Alcova are a little over twice the size of the foot of *P. kochi*, so they were probably made by a pterodactyl with a wingspan of a little over a meter— bigger than *P. kochi*, but still nowhere near large enough to carry away Raquel Welch, no matter what you might have seen in the movies. There

was also a tiny species, *Pterodactylus elegans*. *P. elegans* had a wingspan of only 25 centimeters and was light enough to perch on your finger.



Pteranodon and Pterodactylus size comparison

There were larger flying reptiles than the pterodactyl. *Pteranodon* (that's pronounced tĕ-RĀ-nō-dŏn,) lived in Kansas near the end of the Cretaceous period. It had a head over a meter and a half long, and a wingspan of 8 meters. It was larger than any flying animal in the world today. Just two meters under the wingspan of a small private aircraft.

