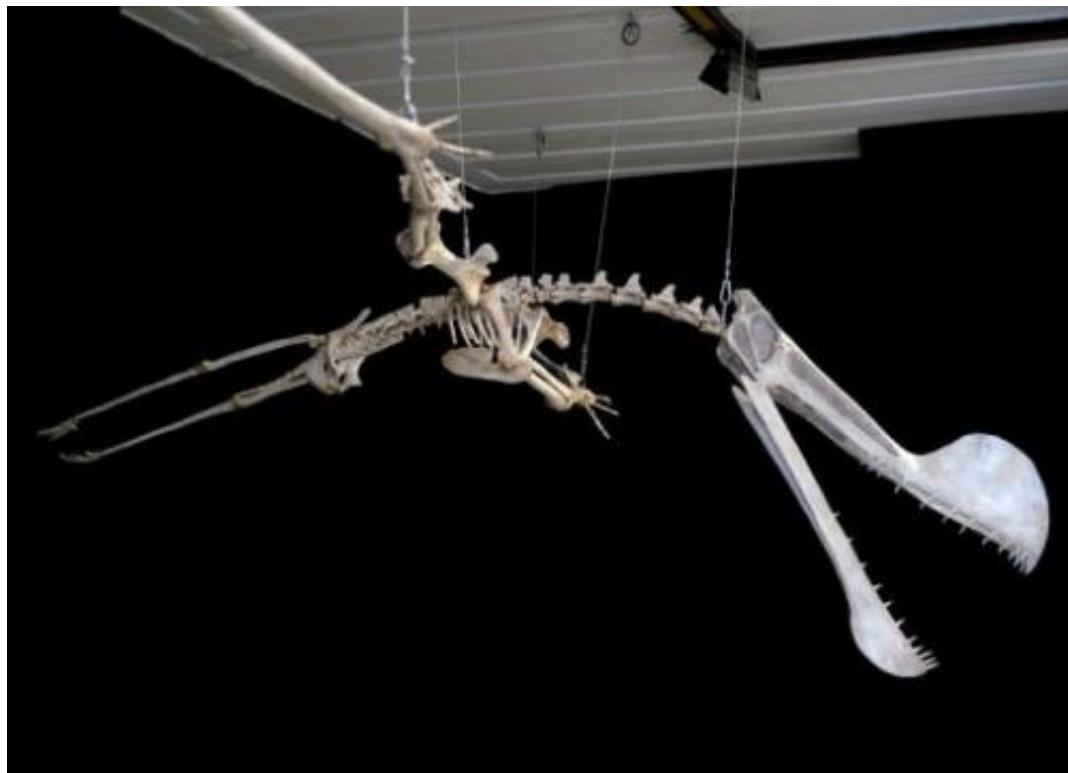


Remains of huge fossilized flying reptile displayed in Rio

March 20 2013



A replica of the fossil of a Pterosaur of the "Tropeognathus Mesembrinus" species is displayed at the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on March 20, 2013. Brazilian paleontologists informed that it is the largest individual of its kind found in the southern hemisphere.

The fossilized remains of a huge prehistoric flying reptile was unveiled Wednesday at the Rio de Janeiro National Museum where an

international congress on the extinct species is to be held in May.

"What makes it particularly special is that it is the most complete fossil ever found, with virtually the entire skeleton and even the skull preserved," said Alexander Kellner, a paleontologist of the Rio Federal University as he presented a life-size mock-up of the pterosaur or "winged lizard." The creature has a wingspan of 8.2 meters (27 feet).

The fossil, attributed to the "Tropeognathus mesembrinus" species, was found in the Chapada do Araripe plateau of northeastern Brazil.

Kellner described it as "the biggest ever found in the southern hemisphere and the third worldwide."

"We can prove that these giant reptiles flew in the skies of northeast Brazil much earlier than initially thought because fossils were found in rock formations dating 110 million years," according to Kellner.

He said it was previously thought that pterosaurs lived at the end of the Cretaceous period, some 72 to 86 million years ago.

Pterosaur species have been found in places like Morocco, Britain, Mongolia, the United States, China and northeastern Brazil.

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