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Time : 28 minutes

The reading states three reasons to explain why pterosaurs were incapable of powered flight or flying by flapping their wings and they were only able to glide. However, the lecturer believes that the reasons are illogical casts doubt on them.

Firstly, the author holds the view that pterosaurs were cold-blooded animals with a slow metabolism, just like modern reptiles. Thus, they are unable to provide the energy required for powered flight. On the contrary, the lecturer argues that today’s researches indicate that pterosaurs were ancient reptiles with dense hair and fur covering similar to birds. This feature is typical of warm-blooded animals to help them maintain a high body temperature in cold times. The lecturer believes that pterosaurs were able to supply enough energy for flapping their wings since they were warm-blooded like modern birds and the author’s supposition is not acceptable at all.

Secondly, the passage brings up the idea that animals with a weight heavier than a certain mass, are not able to stay aloft by powered flight and since pterosaurs were as large as some giraffes, they could not flap their wings fast enough to be kept airborne. In contrast, the lecturer mentions that there were some anatomical features that made the pterosaurs lighter for their body size. For example, their bones were hollow instead of solid. Thus their weight was low enough to allow them to keep themselves airborne by powered flight.

Finally, the author suggests that since pterosaurs were deprived of powerful back muscles to launch them into the air, they could not use some methods that birds use for powered flight. The lecturer, on the other hand, discusses that birds and pterosaurs are different in many ways, such as how they walk. Pterosaurs, unlike many birds, walk on all four of their limbs. Although their back muscles are not strong enough to push them off the ground, they had no trouble running fast or jumping high enough to launch to air. For example, bats use all four of their limbs to walk or to take off by jumping.