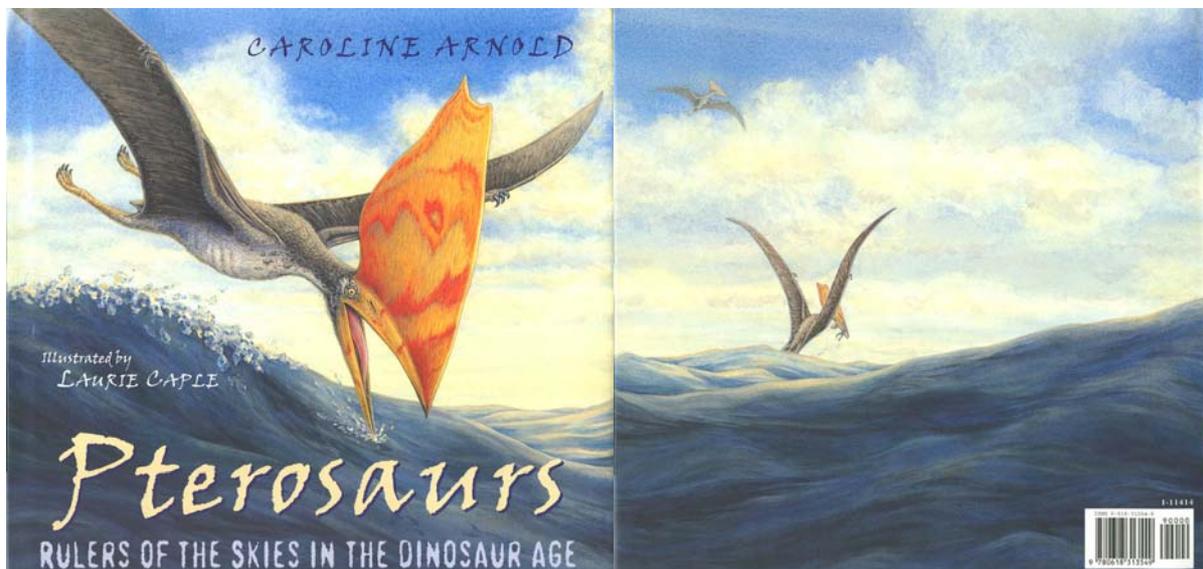


**Arnold, C. 2004 (illustrations by L. Caple). Pterosaurs. Rulers of the skies in the dinosaur age. – New York, Clarion Books**

Book review by A.J. Veldmeijer



Children love dinosaurs and not surprisingly, with the increased interest in these prehistoric animals since Spielberg's films *Jurassic Park* and BBC's 'Walking with dinosaurs', yearly many children books appear (few have been reviewed at [www.PalArch.nl](http://www.PalArch.nl), see the archive in the Centre of Book Reviews). But the vast majority focus on dinosaurs and children books on other prehistoric animals are rare. Caroline Arnold's 'Pterosaurs. Rulers of the skies in the dinosaur age' is such an exception. Caroline Arnold has written many books for children (also on other non-dinosaur prehistoric animals such as *Megalodon*, the giant shark), which becomes immediately clear once you start reading,

The book has 40 pages and large font, making reading easy. The chapters are short and try to include the necessary information in which Arnold succeeds well. The artwork is fabulous and clearly visualises for the young readers (aimed at children in the age of 8-12) how these strange animals looked like. This is especially important because there are no comparable animals living nowadays. These first flying vertebrates were unique in many respects. It is thus important to explain the body of pterosaurs, which is done in a chapter after the chapters giving general information on taxonomy, names and ages, and before the chapters with more specific information on variety, what they ate etc.

A drawback of many children books (and this one is no exception) is that the information given is not really up to date. Arnold did explain the change in naming of the first pterosaurs (from 'Rhamphorhynchoids' to 'basal pterosaurs') but more species specific information is slightly out of date. An example is the reconstruction of the mandible of *Anhanguera santanae*, which shows the dentary sagittal crest situated well before the front tip of the jaw; we know however, that the crest started at the very tip of the snout, comparable to *Coloborhynchus* (in this book referred to as *Tropeognathus*). Another example is that the spectacular finds of pterosaur eggs are not mentioned (Wang & Zhou, 2004): here, it is stated that eggs have not yet been found but this is due to the fact that the finds were reported after Arnold's book was released. But these are minor points of criticism.

All in all, this book is a much welcomed addition to the child-book-library and I am sure that children, interested in dinosaurs, would love to read this book as well, even though these contemporaries are not dinosaurs. Well done!

Arnold, C. 2004 (illustrations by L. Caple). Pterosaurs. Rulers of the skies in the dinosaur age. – New York, Clarion Books. 40 pp. ISBN 061831354. Price \$16.00 (hardback).

#### Cited literature

**Wang, X. & Z. Zhou. 2004.** Pterosaur embryo from the Early Cretaceous. – *Nature* 429: 621.