# Jurassic Pterosaur Fossil 'Abfab' Unearthed in Abingdon-on-Thames Gravel Pit



A significant discovery has been made in a gravel pit in Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, where a fossilized bone of a large pterosaur from the Jurassic period was unearthed in June 2022. Geologist Dr. James Etienne identified the wing bone, which was broken into three pieces yet remained well-preserved.

Researchers from the Universities of Portsmouth and Leicester have examined the fossil, determining it to be an adult ctenochasmatoid. This group of pterosaurs is known for their long, slender wings, long jaws, and fine bristle-like teeth. The specimen, nicknamed "Abfab," has a wingspan estimated to be around 3.75 meters (12 feet).

Professor David Martill from the University of Portsmouth highlighted the significance of the find, noting that while smaller than Cretaceous pterosaurs, it is among the largest known from the Jurassic period. This revelation indicates that Jurassic pterosaurs could reach larger sizes than previously believed.

The fossil was discovered within the Late Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay Formation, which also exposed numerous other ancient sea creature remains, including bones from ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, ammonites, bivalves, marine crocodiles, and sharks.

Dr. Dave Unwin from the University of Leicester added that this discovery shows that pterodactyloids achieved remarkable sizes shortly after their emergence in the Middle Jurassic period.

The research findings are published in the journal "Proceedings of the Geologists’ Association," and the bone is now housed in the Etches Collection in Kimmeridge, Dorset.