Pterosaurs had Smart Wings and Big Brains

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Pterosaurs had "smart wings" and big brains, according to reports in *Nature* vol 425, p950, 30 October 2003 and ScienceNOW 29 October 2003. Lawrence Witmar of Ohio University, and colleagues have studied computerised x-rays of pterosaur skulls and found they had large semicircular canals and an enormous flocculus area in their brain. The semicircular canals are a sense organ that monitors head position and movement. Large semicircular canals indicate a very good sense of balance. The flocculus is a part of the brain that collects sensory input from bones, joints and muscle and uses it to coordinate head movements so that images on the retina of the eye stay steady. A very large flocculus enables a creature to integrate large amounts of sensory input from all over the body in order to keep the gaze steady while it is making complicated movements. Witmar and colleagues suggested that pterosaurs had many sensory receptors in their wings. These findings indicate pterosaurs were highly agile fliers with good vision.

Editorial Comment: If pterosaurs did have "smart wings" and complex brains, it is for the same reason that modern day high tech aircraft have smart wings and complex computer systems. Aircarft were were designed by smart engineers. Pterosaurs were designed by an even smarter engineer. (Ref. pterosaurs, wings, design)