



## INTRODUCTION Meganeura - The Giant Dragonfly

Dragonflies have inhabited our planet for over 300 million years. They were buzzing through the primeval forests long before the dinosaurs. Dragonflies are fascinating insects with amazing flying abilities. For example, they can fly forward and backward, or hover like a helicopter in midair. Some of these darting insects can reach a flying speed of 31 miles (50 kilometers) per hour. In doing so, they beat their wings about 30 times per second.



Their huge compound eves cover almost the entire head. This gives a dragonfly the ability to see its immediate surroundings in a panoramic view of almost 360 degrees - something that's hardly imaginable to us humans. The dragonfly can therefore see what's happening in front and what's happening behind them at the same time.

The giant dragonfly, Meganeura, lived around 300 million years ago during the Earth's Carboniferous period. It looks almost the same as today's dragonflies but it had an incredible 27,5 inches (70 cm) wingspan! The dragonfly depicted here is a reconstruction from fossils of the original size. The intricate pattern of veins that runs through its huge wings is especially fascinating. The intricate graphic structure of the veins invites you to use your imagination and color in the sections using the most dazzling combinations you can think of! ABB

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