

**HISTORY AUDIO-DATEI**

## **Dornier X**

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# Dornier X

**Als das Flugboot Do X vor 80 Jahren zum ersten Mal vom Bodensee abhob, war es das größte und schwerste Flugzeug seiner Zeit. Trotz einer Betriebsdauer von nur fünf Jahren ist es auch heute noch eine Legende.**

Airplanes are such lovely machines – glorious as birds, in their *diversity*. The smallest piloted airplane, the *Bumblebee* II, flew in 1988. This *tiny* biplane, with its five-and-a-half-foot wingspan, was built by Robert Starr of Phoenix, Arizona. Starr flew it several times before he crashed and was seriously hurt.

Several planes *vie* for the crown of largest-ever-flown. It depends on whether we look at wingspan, weight, or some other figure. We have yet to *exceed* the 97-metre wingspan of Howard Hughes' *Spruce* Goose, or the 650-ton takeoff weight of the Airbus 380 – capable of carrying 853 passengers.

That said, here's a historic extreme airplane for you: the 1929 Dornier X. Germany was under the *restrictions* of the Versailles Treaty which forbade her from building powered airplanes. The engineer, Claudius Dornier, had *honed* his skills working for Count von Zeppelin on *dirigible* design. When he turned to heavier-than-air seaplanes, he set up shop on the Swiss side of *Lake Constance* where he wouldn't *violate* the Treaty. Now he'd finished his Dornier X; and what an airplane it was!

Its takeoff weight was over sixty tons and it was powered by twelve six-hundred-horsepower engines. They were *mounted* in six *pods* above the airplane's 157-foot wing. Six engines pulled the airplane forward; and six more faced backward, pushing it. It was far and away the largest airplane up 'til then designed to carry seventy passengers in *sumptuous* comfort. Dornier called it the X because it *heralded* an unknown future.

The X made a demonstration run over Lake Constance in October, 1929. During the forty-minute flight, it carried, not seventy, but 169, people – employees, journalists, *stowaways*, and a ten-man crew. That record wouldn't be *bested* until the mid-'40s.

A year later, The Dornier X set out on another demonstration run. This time it would fly the Atlantic (three years after Lindbergh). The *convoluted* route included stops throughout Europe, then from Portugal to West Africa and across the Atlantic to stops in South America. Finally it flew to New York by way of Miami.

	<i>deliver</i>
	<i>magnificent</i>
<i>variety</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>very small</i>	<i>covered ... carpets</i>
	<i>luxurious</i>
<i>fight</i>	<i>am sorrowful</i>
<i>*see list ... simple functional</i>	
<i>outdo</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>limitations ... contract</i>	
<i>refined</i>	
<i>airship</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>breach</i>	
<i>installed</i>	
<i>gondolas</i>	
<i>luxurious</i>	
<i>indicated</i>	
<i>*see list</i>	
<i>beaten</i>	
<i>complicated</i>	

Of course the flight exposed weaknesses. The engines ate too much fuel; a fire in Lisbon grounded it for six weeks. The ten-month Odyssey actually made it clear that this plane would never *provide* the regular transoceanic service the public wanted. At the same time, I can hardly call this *grand* gesture a failure.

I can only dream of flying a long flight in this aerial hotel with its private sleeping quarters, its central salon *carpeted* in Oriental *rugs*, *plush* furniture – of eating freshly prepared food in its dining room. Airplanes are indeed as lovely as birds in their diversity. And I especially *grieve* that no Dornier X survives to display its brilliant *plumage* in our *plain utilitarian* age of aerial transport. ■

*Prof. Dr. John Lienhard, University of Houston*

<i>best, to</i>	<i>übertreffen</i>
<i>bumblebee</i>	<i>Hummel</i>
<i>carpet, to</i>	<i>bedecken, auslegen</i>
<i>convoluted</i>	<i>kompliziert, gewunden</i>
<i>dirigible</i>	<i>Luftschiff</i>
<i>diversity</i>	<i>Mannigfaltigkeit, Vielfalt</i>
<i>exceed, to</i>	<i>übertreffen</i>
<i>grand</i>	<i>großartig, bedeutend</i>
<i>grieve, to</i>	<i>trauern</i>
<i>herald, to</i>	<i>verkünden, ankündigen</i>
<i>hone, to</i>	<i>verbessern, verfeinern</i>
<i>Lake Constance</i>	<i>Bodensee</i>
<i>mount, to</i>	<i>befestigen, anbauen</i>
<i>plain</i>	<i>schlicht, klar</i>
<i>plumage</i>	<i>Gefieder</i>
<i>plush</i>	<i>Plüsch, feudal</i>
<i>pod</i>	<i>Gondel</i>
<i>provide, to</i>	<i>bieten, leisten</i>
<i>restriction</i>	<i>Einschränkung</i>
<i>rug</i>	<i>Teppich</i>
<i>spruce</i>	<i>Fichte, auch: gepflegt, adrett</i>
<i>stowaway</i>	<i>blinder Passagier</i>
<i>sumptuous</i>	<i>luxuriös, aufwendig</i>
<i>tiny</i>	<i>winzig</i>
<i>treaty</i>	<i>Vertrag</i>
<i>utilitarian</i>	<i>funktionell</i>
<i>vie, to</i>	<i>konkurrieren, wetteifern</i>
<i>violate, to</i>	<i>verletzen, brechen</i>

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