

# EXOTIC ZOOLOGY

The Bimonthly Magazine of Cryptozoology

Vol. 5, #5 September/October 1998 Matthew A. Bille, Editor

## MYSTERY ANIMALS: THE TOP FIVE

Everyone interested in cryptozoology has an idea of what cryptids are most likely to be real, or which ones are most likely to be found (the two aren't necessarily synonymous). With this issue, it's time to have some fun! Herewith, this editor offers a personal "top five" and explains why particular animals were included or excluded.

My criteria was, "If I had money and resources to pursue five cryptozoological animals anywhere in the world, what creatures would I go after?" I would not want to waste time on intriguing but probably hopeless quests, such as looking for Steller's sea monkey over three hundred years after the only good sighting. Nor would I head for Loch Ness, where plenty of effort has been expended without coming up with hard evidence. Finally, I would leave out cases like the Australian puma, where the evidence is very good but the subject is almost certainly a known species in an out-of-place habitat.

Now that qualifying statements are out of the way...

My #1 animal would be a species which we know did exist, but we're not sure of now. That's the thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*). There are good sightings and ancillary evidence (tracks, kills, etc.) which add up to a convincing case for continued existence. We'd better find

## TOP FIVE (Continued):

it fast, though: I'd be surprised if there were more than twenty animals left in Tasmania. If they're rediscovered, captive breeding is probably the only hope (although a long shot, since it didn't work when we had thylacines in captivity). The case for thylacines still living on the Australian mainland is not as strong, but is quite intriguing: maybe I'd look there if I didn't find them in Tasmania.

I don't hold out much hope for the other claims of large and spectacular survivors. Some of the reported sightings of Steller's sea cow are intriguing, but it's hard to imagine we've been overlooking coastal-water animals about as mobile and inconspicuous as small islands. The claims for survival of the mammoth are based on far less.

So let's move on to the rest of the top five - my pick for the most intriguing mystery animals. Some of these could be new species, others unusual varieties of known animals. They are:

2. The mystery beaked whales. There is no doubt at least one beaked whale of unknown type, referred to as *Mesoplodon Species A*, exists in Pacific. We have clear color photographs of it. A marine biologist, Karin Forney, observed a different, also unknown, type off the coast of Oregon. One of these animals may be the enigmatic *Mesoplodon pacificus*, known only from two weathered skulls, or both may be new species. One thing's for sure: there is a discovery to be made.

3. An elongated, or long-necked (it may be either) marine animal known (no doubt inaccurately) as "the sea serpent." The sighting by Nicoll and Meade-Waldo in 1905 is, to me, the single most fascinating episode in all of cryptozoology. No known animal matches the description, yet it was too clear, the conditions too good, the witnesses too qualified for the sighting to be easily dismissed as a misidentification. No one has postulated a convincing explanation. (I have the greatest respect for Richard Ellis, but if anyone ever films a squid swimming tentacles-first while keeping one fin and one arm continuously above the surface, I will personally eat the entire animal, with or without tartar sauce.)

The problem with this quest is that I would have no idea where to start looking. The Nicoll sighting was off Brazil. The other two most compelling "sea serpent" episodes were far apart in time and space. One was a series of encounters by the French Navy off Indochina from 1897 to 1904, and the other concerns the carcass of a smaller (or juvenile) unknown animal found in the stomach of a sperm whale at Naden Harbor, British Columbia, Canada, in 1937. Are all three episodes genuine? If so, do they concern the same species? I don't know.

4. The mystery animals of Lake Iliamna, Alaska. Reports of spindle-shaped creatures seen from the water and from the air have been coming out of this huge (2200 square kilometer) body of water for a long time. A report by a state biologist, who observed such an animal, 8 to 9 meters long, from a plane in 1963, is quite compelling. One of the things that interests me here is that the animals are almost certainly

### TOP FIVE (Continued):

fish, since they rarely surface: there's clearly no connection between these and the more widely known (but, to me, less persuasive) cases of long-necked "lake monsters" from around the world. While some fishing efforts have been tried, a thorough sonar search has never been done.

5. *Octopus giganteus*. I know a chemical analysis purported to identify the *O. giganteus* tissue found in Florida in 1896 as blubber, but that analysis left some unanswered questions. There are photos (most published in Ellis' *Monsters of the Sea*) which show a huge mass with what look like tentacles. How something like that could be torn off a whale and have no cetacean features (fins, bones, etc.) is unexplained.

Those are my personal selections. I'll be interested to hear from readers with other ideas. What do you think?

**Sources:** Anonymous. 1988. "The Iliamna Lake Monster," *Alaska*, January, p.17 // Ellis, Richard. 1994. *Monsters of the Sea*. New York: Doubleday. // Forney, Karen. 1997. Personal communication, April 1 // Healy, Tony, and Paul Cropper. 1994. *Out of the Shadows*. Chippendale: Ironbark Press // Heuvelmans, Bernard. 1968. *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*. New York: Hill and Wang. // LeBlond, Paul H., and Edward Bousfield. 1995. *Cadborosaurus: Survivor From the Deep*. Victoria, B.C.: Horsdal and Schubart // LeBlond and Bousfield. 1995. "An Account of *Cadborosaurus willsi*, new genus, new species, a large aquatic reptile from the Pacific coast of North America," *Amphipacifica*. Vol. I, Supplement I, April 20 // Nicoll, Michael J. 1908. *Three Voyages of a Naturalist*. London: Witherby & Co. // Sutherland, Straun. 1995. "Sighting puts new bite into tiger tale," *Australian Doctor*, 31 March.

## NEWS AND COMMENT

Thanks to an exhaustive re-appraisal of the genus *Sus* by Colin Groves, we now know there are **more wild pigs in Asia** than previously believed. Since the recent rediscovery of the Vietnamese warty pig (*Sus bucculentis*), two new subspecies (from Bawean Island and northwest India) have been identified. Of even more interest is the identification of **two new species**, the Visayan warty pig (*Sus cebifrons*) and Philippine warty pig (*Sus philippensis*). An interesting note on the Visayan pig: until it was bred in captivity as part of a conservation program, it was so totally unknown that even its external appearance was uncertain. According to an article in the invaluable IUCN journal *Species*, African pigs have also undergone a reevaluation, which identified **two more new species**, the red river hog (*Potamochoerus porcus*) and the bushpig (*Potamochoerus larvatus*). Finally, there may be two more distinct forms in the Philippines. **Source:** Oliver, William. 1998. "More and More and Fewer and Fewer," *Species*, No. 30, June, pp.57-8. **Thanks to** David Lupton for this article.

The **effort to resurrect the quagga** through selective breeding continues to make progress. Eleven "reconstructed" quaggas have been released in South Africa's Karoo National Park. Are the animals really quaggas? The project's geneticist says, in effect, that an animal which looks like a quagga might as well be called one, because there's no way to prove it's not. Being a subspecies of the common zebra (*Equus burchelli*), the quagga can't be differentiated by DNA. **Source:** Harris, Paul. 1998. "Extinct Zebras May be Back," Associated Press, August 9.

## THE GIANT SQUID

To most people, *Architeuthis* is a bizarre-looking monster. To cryptozoologists, however, it's a wonderful animal: a huge, highly improbable creature, dismissed for a long time by most zoologists as fantasy, which turned out to be very real (and very big) indeed. Richard Ellis' upcoming book *Architeuthis* will no doubt join Ellis' *Monsters of the Sea* as must-reading for the cryptozoologist. With Mr. Ellis' kind permission, we reprint his tale of a squid's arrival at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

*Architeuthis in New York*  
by Neil Landman and Richard Ellis

After exhibiting a model for 103 years, the museum now has an actual specimen of *Architeuthis*, the giant squid. Caught in a net off New Zealand in late 1997 by commercial fishermen, the 25-foot-long male *Architeuthis kirki* was fast frozen and kept aboard their fishing vessel for about two months. It was then brought to the Wellington laboratory of Steve O'Shea, a scientist with New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmosphere. Both authors had been in touch with O'Shea, trying to obtain a specimen for the Museum's collection. We were interested in studying the animal and acquiring a specimen of the largest living invertebrate.

When this specimen was brought to Wellington, O'Shea contacted NL and generously offered the specimen to the Museum. The Museum paid for the shipping and also arranged for O'Shea to accompany the squid to New York. Following the progress of the two travelers (one frozen and packed in a crate marked "seafood," the other worrying about explaining a giant squid to American customs), members of the Museum's Department of Invertebrates headed for Kennedy Airport to meet the flight. Unfortunately, the squid was too heavy for the flight from LAX to JFK, so O'Shea flew from LA to New York thinking the squid was on the plane with him, only to disembark and learn that it was still in L.A. The squid was scheduled for the next flight, so back went the staff to the airport to welcome it. After passing through customs (for the second time), it was transferred to a refrigerated truck and brought to the Museum, where we waited to see if it had thawed out on its trans-Pacific and trans-continental flights. The Big Calamari was still frozen solid, so member's of the Museum's moving gang transferred it to the exhibition wing (the largest available space), in preparation for its debut appearance for the press.

When we finally had the opportunity to examine it, it was even more interesting than we had imagined. *Architeuthis* is the largest living invertebrate, the largest ones reaching a total length (including tentacles) of 57 feet. The presence of spermatophores indicated that ours was a mature male -- not a baby at all. (In many species of cephalopods, females grow larger than males, and this may be the case with *Architeuthis*.) Although there are many smaller species of squid that have specialized light organs (photophores) in their skin, this species is not among the self-illuminating. Also, it has no hooks on its arms, the way the fictional giant squid in Peter Benchley's novel *Beast* did.

But *Architeuthis* doesn't need lights or hooks to make it spectacular: It has the largest eyes in the animal kingdom -- this one's eyes were six inches across (the largest ones are the size of dinner plates.) It has a huge, parrot-like beak that it uses to rip chunks of flesh from its victims -- whatever they might be. (We do not know what *Architeuthis* eats, nor, for that matter, if it eats after breeding. The males of many species of squids die after they mate, and the females die soon after they lay their eggs.)

From specimens like this one, we know that giant squids are purplish-brown in color. The arms showed much of the original coloration, but it had worn off on other parts of the body. Squids have eight arms and two long tentacles, all equipped with toothed suckers. In addition, *Architeuthis* has grommet-like "fasteners" on the inner surface of the tentacles, which enables the squid to clip the tentacles together and use the club ends -- also armed with suckers -- as a sort of a pincers or pliers. The body of this specimen was eight feet long, the arms were another eight feet, and the two tentacles added another nine or ten feet to its total length.

(Neil Landman is the Chairman of the Museum's Department of Invertebrates, and Richard Ellis is the author of the forthcoming "Search for the Giant Squid." For their help with the specimen, the authors would like to thank Paula Mikkelsen, etc.)

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

I hope I haven't totally confused everyone with the change in publishing schedule. To recap: I had to spend less time on **EZ**, which meant either a shorter newsletter or fewer issues. I opted for a shorter format, but most readers I heard from didn't like that idea, so I switched to keeping the 8-page format the same and making it quarterly instead of every two months. The new subscription rate will be \$10 a year for U.S. mail subscribers, \$13 for airmail to other countries. (No one expressed interest in an Email version.)

Cost for those who only want to renew through 5:6 (current format):

# of issues	U.S.	U.S. Student	Other Countries	Foreign Student
1	\$3	2	4	3

To make it easy to renew, one way is to pay for the remainder of this year using the prices listed above, then add \$10 or \$13 (as appropriate) for all 1999 issues. Please write or Email if you have questions.

## NEWS AND COMMENT

**A trove of undiscovered species** has been found on a tiny, rocky speck of land called Navassa Island. This U.S.-owned island, only a few square kilometers in size, has just been surveyed by a research team which found it almost untouched by humans. An **estimated 250 species** of animals and plants are believed to be new, including lizards plus wingless crickets and a variety of other insects. This is astonishing given that the island is described as a "slab of jagged, broiling-hot limestone" with no sources of fresh water other than rain. **Source:** Warrick, Joby. 1998. "Unsullied by Humans, U.S. Island is Biological Motherlode," *Washington Post*, August 17. **Thanks to** Loren Coleman for this item.

New Zealand scientists are reporting the third success in **cloning an adult mammal**. This has some implications for cryptozoology because the mammal cloned was the last living specimen of a breed of cow. "Lady" was the last survivor of a herd living on sub-antarctic Enderby Island. A unique breed of cattle, with short legs and the ability to live mainly on seaweed, developed in the island's harsh conditions. David Wells, leader of the science team, described this case as "proof of principle" that cloning could be used to help some endangered species. **Comment:** This won't work for creatures like the thylacine, since a closely related "surrogate mother" is needed. If those quagga researchers can get just one "real" quagga, though... **Source:** Weiss, Rick. 1998. "New Zealand Scientists Clone the Last Cow of a Rare Breed," *Washington Post*, August 20.

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS.

There are now two travelogues out concerning individual writers' experiences looking for the rumored Congo dinosaur, mokele-mbembe. Redmon O'Hanlon's *No Mercy: A Journey to the Heart of the Congo* (1997: Alfred A. Knopf) is more of a serious exploration of the region. O'Hanlon never saw the creature, but collected some fascinating background on the Congo and its people. He also heard a report of an animal called Yombe, which looked like a chimp or gorilla but was neither. A previous effort, *Drums Along the Congo* (1993: Houghton Mifflin) by Rory Nugent, is shorter and more light-hearted. Nugent believes he did spot his quarry, but his native guides prevented him (at gunpoint!) from getting too close to an animal they considered a god. There are photographs in his book, but the object in them is too distant for identification. Those seriously investigating this mystery should read both books.

Alten, Steve. 1997. *Meg*. New York: Bantam Books. Unquestionably the worst cryptozoologically-themed novel since Norman Bogner's *Snowman*, and maybe the worst ever. Alten's scenario for the survival of *Carcharodon megalodon* is completely unbelievable (there are no hydrothermal vents in the Marianas Trench, to begin with) and his *Megalodon* behaves like no shark - and maybe no animal - in history. Why really good novels with a cryptozoological premise are rarer than sasquatch skulls is an annoying mystery.

Two good "background" books on known animals of cryptozoological interest are out. Rodney Steel's *Living Dragons: A Natural History of the World's Monitor Lizards* (Sanibel Island, FL: Ralph Curtis Books. 160pp.) is a well-written and -illustrated survey of all known monitor lizards, their near kin, and their ancestors. (Did you know the meter-long *Varanus telenestus* was only described in 1990?) There's a lot of information on Australia's giant *Megalania*, believed to have died out ca. 20,000 years ago. Steel takes a conservative approach to size, stating that no living monitor is known to exceed 3.5m (11 feet) in length. Alan Turner has filled an important niche with his 1997 book *The Big Cats and their fossil relatives* (New York: Columbia University Press. 234pp.). Turner discusses the current big cats and all known fossil forms, putting his subjects in context. Turner does not address any cryptozoological subjects, but provides a great deal of knowledge useful in evaluating "unknown cat" claims. The book's illustrations are superb.

### INTERNET.

An article reprinted from the *Gulf Coast Historical Review* is available on-line at <http://www.browmarine.com.story06.htm>. "Close Encounter With a Creature 'of the Finny Tribe': Louisiana's Sea Monster Sighting of 1856," recounts the killing of a "monster" that was, in all probability, a large manta ray.

## INTERNET .

A video clip taken in 1991 and believed by the photographer to show "South Bay Bessie," the alleged monster of Lake Erie, has been posted on <http://home.fuse.net/rschaffner/bessie2.htm>. This site is maintained by cryptozoologist Ron Schaffner, who cautions the video may show nothing more than "driftwood in the current."

## PERIODICALS .

The August issue of the always-excellent **BBC Wildlife** has a major article on the efforts to breed the quagga back from extinction. It also offers a look at cryptozoological television programs and promises an article on alleged sasquatch films in the next issue. According to the always, helpful Loren Coleman, this will allege the Patterson-Gimlin film is a fake, based mainly on Gimlin's admission that he *might* have been had. More in the next issue of **EZ**.

## MORE NEWS

Scientists in Ecuador have come up with a very **strange new mammal**. *Chibchanomys orcesi* is a new species belonging to one of the five genera making up the Neotropical fishing mice (Ichthyomyini). This bizarre little rodent is found only on the Cajas Plateau in the Andes. It's nearly blind and lives like an otter, diving into streams at night and using its sensitive whiskers to find fish and other food. **Source:** Ashton, Paul. 1998. "High-fishing," *BBC Wildlife*, August, p.62.

The monster of Sweden's Storsjoe lake (Great Lake) has failed to yield up its secrets to an international team led by Adrian Shine, a longtime Loch Ness investigator. The team deployed 15 boats along with sonar, video cameras, and divers, but all they turned up were inconclusive sonar targets. The creature has been reported for over a century, but descriptions extremely inconsistent. **Sources:** AP and Reuters, 1998. Wire reports, August 16 and 17.

A **new species of bird**, a robin, has been described from the Central African Republic. Pamela Beresford, a graduate student working with the American Museum of Natural History, collected the bird in late 1996. It took until now to compare it with other specimens and establish its uniqueness. The new bird is described as olive-brown with a yellow belly and yellowish-red plumage on its throat and upper breast. According to Dr. Phil Hockey of the University of Cape Town in South Africa, "Ten years or so ago, ornithologists were saying that by now all bird species would be known. But today new species are popping up all over the place." According to Hockey, there are **two more species awaiting formal descriptions**, plus many other potential new species which have been seen but not yet caught and classified. In the last half-century, **47 new species of birds** have been snared in the wild. That number doesn't include the new species described from restudy and reclassification of existing specimens. **Source:** Astor, Michael. 1998. "New Robin Species Found in Africa," AP, August 21.

## EDITOR'S PAGE

**PURPOSE:** Cryptozoology is the zoological subspecialty of finding new or supposedly extinct species of all types and sizes. The term has, unfortunately, become associated largely with sensationalized "monsters" in the public mind. Some writers even use it to refer to "ghost" animals. *Exotic Zoology* is intended to help restore the word's proper usage: the name of a hard science devoted to collecting and studying evidence.

**IN CLOSING:** Serious researchers should inquire about joining the International Society of Cryptozoology (P.O. Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733). The ISC has resumed publication of its *Newsletter*, although correspondence and publications have been irregular.

*EZ* is published 4 times a year by Matthew A. Bille, Editor, and Deborah A. Bille, J.D., Business Manager. Our address is 3405 Windjammer Dr., Colorado Springs, CO, 80920, USA. Email: MattWriter@AOL.com. Subscriptions beginning in 1999 are \$10 a year for U.S. addresses, \$13 for all other countries. **Back issues are available.** Copyright 1998. Permission granted to duplicate any text for educational use: write for permission concerning illustrations.

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Still Available:

### **RUMORS OF EXISTENCE**

by Matthew A. Bille

"A lovely little book, jam-packed with fascinating material."

- Richard Ellis, author, *Monsters of the Sea*

*Rumors* presents the full range of important discoveries in recent zoology, including new, rediscovered, and unconfirmed animals. Published by Hancock House, it lists at \$12.95. The ISBN is 0-88839-335-0. You can order at any bookstore or direct from the publisher at 1(800)938-1114. You can also order an autographed copy directly from the author. To cover the book and postage, send \$15 (for U.S. addresses) or \$17 (other countries) to the *EZ* address above.

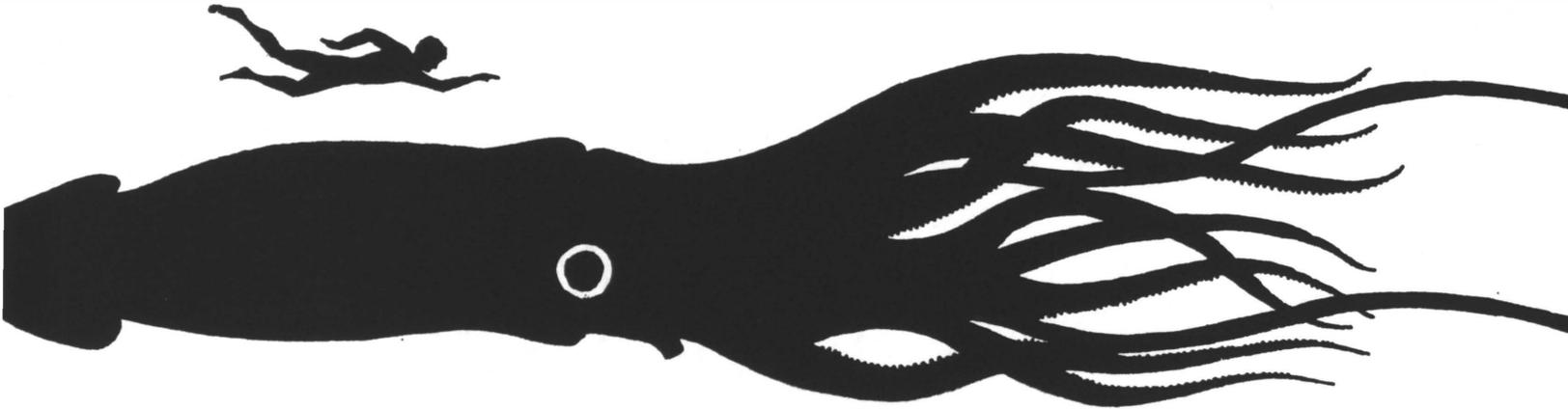
*Logo illustration: Delphinus rhinoceros, described by naturalists Quoy and Gaimard in 1819. Drawing by Craig Gosling copyright 1994.*

# THE SEARCH FOR THE GIANT SQUID

by

**RICHARD ELLIS**

Lyons Press \$35 (320 p) ISBN 1-55821-689-8



**Publishers Weekly, 10 August 1998:**

It is surprisingly strange that, as Ellis writes, "no one has ever seen a living, healthy giant squid" -- for, judging from the evidence, comprised mostly of carcasses and remains found in sperm whales, there are a multitude of the beasts out there, growing up to 60 feet long, albeit usually, it's thought at a depth of several hundred feet. But it's not at all strange that, from the meager evidence about *Architeuthis*, Ellis -- author of such fine books as *Imagining Atlantis* (Forecasts, May 25) and *Monsters of the Sea* (1995; portions of this newest Ellis book first appeared there) -- has fashioned an absorbing work of natural history and a classic of cryptozoology. Some of the appeal of this book is visual, as it presents 30 b&w photographs and 35 line drawings, many historical, several of the drawings by Ellis himself. It's the author's elegant, informative, passionate text that ultimately carries the day, however, as this marine scientist reports on every aspect of the giant squid and its study, covering its biology and behavior, its taxonomy, historical records of its appearances, its treatment in literature, film and museum models, and more. And Ellis not only reports on but sifts through the record, challenging several previous "sightings," most notably those of Jacques Cousteau. At times, the book has a kitchen-sink-and-all feel, as if Ellis aims to cram in every known bit of data about the giant squid; even dedicated monster-lovers may find more here than they want to know. Still, the giant squid may be the Earth's last great unknown animal; certainly it is one of nature's enduring mysteries. In this authoritative book, Ellis vivifies and celebrates that mystery with erudition and consummate skill.

Newbridge Natural Science Book Club main selection; author tour. (Oct.)