

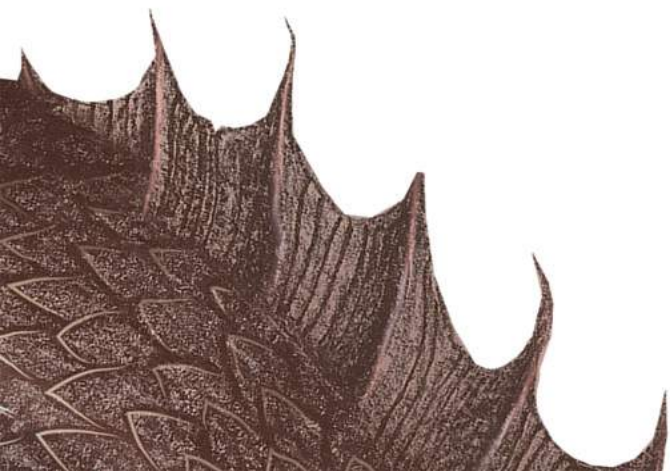
illustrated by
VLADIMIR STANKOVIC

Illustrated Encyclopedia of
CRYPTOZOOLOGY

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The Definition of CRYPTOZOOLOGY

Cryptozoology (from Greek *kryptos*, "hidden" and *zoology*; literally, "study of hidden animals") refers to the search for animals whose existence has not been proven. This includes looking for living examples of animals that are considered extinct, such as dinosaurs; animals whose existence lacks physical evidence but which appear in myths, legends, or are reported, such as Bigfoot and Chupacabra; and wild animals dramatically outside their normal geographic ranges, such as phantom cats.

The animals cryptozoologists study are often referred to as *cryptids*, a term coined by John Wall in 1983.

Cryptozoology is *not* a recognized branch of zoology or a discipline of science.



Overview

The coining of the word cryptozoology is often attributed to Belgian-French zoologist Bernard Heuvelmans, though Heuvelmans attributes coinage of the term to the late Scottish explorer and adventurer Ivan T. Sanderson. Heuvelmans' 1955 book *On the Track of Unknown Animals* traces the scholarly origins of the discipline to Anthonie Cornelis Oudemans and his 1892 study, *The Great Sea Serpent*. Heuvelmans argued that cryptozoology should be undertaken with scientific rigor, but with an open-minded, interdisciplinary approach. He also stressed that attention should be given to local, urban and folkloric sources regarding such creatures, arguing that while often layered in unlikely and fantastic elements, folktales can have small grains of truth and important information regarding undiscovered organisms. Phantom cats (an example of living animals supposedly found outside of their normal range) are a common subject of cryptozoological interest, largely due to the relative likelihood of existence in comparison to cryptids lacking any evidence of existence, such as Mothman.

Another notable book on the subject is Willy Ley's *Exotic Zoology* (1959). Ley was best known for his writings on rocketry and related topics, but he was trained in paleontology, and wrote a number of books about animals. Ley's collection *Exotic Zoology* is of some interest to cryptozoology, as he discusses the Yeti and sea serpents, as well as relict dinosaurs. The book entertains the possibility that some legendary creatures (like the sarrasin, the unicorn or the cyclops) might be based on actual animals, through misinterpretation of the animals and/or their remains. Also notable is the work of British zoologist and cryptozoologist Karl Shuker, who has published twelve books and countless articles on numerous cryptozoological subjects since the mid-1980s. Loren Coleman, a modern popularizer of cryptozoology, has chronicled the history and personalities of cryptozoology in his books.

Discoveries

Cryptozoologists claim there have been cases where species now accepted by the scientific community were initially considered superstition, hoaxes, delusions or misidentifications. The popularly reported European discovery of the okapi in 1901, earlier hinted at but unseen by Henry Morton Stanley in his travelogue of exploring the Congo, later became the emblem for the now defunct International Society of Cryptozoology. The mountain gorilla, giant squid and Hoan Kiem Turtle are other examples of extant species that were brought to the attention of modern science but formerly thought to be cryptids. The 2003 discovery of the fossil remains of *Homo floresiensis* was cited by paleontologist Henry Gee, editor of the journal *Nature* as possible evidence that humanoid cryptids like the Yeti were "founded on grains of truth". "Cryptozoology", Gee said, "the study of such fabulous creatures, can come in from the cold."

Buru

The Buru was an aquatic reptile said to have lived in Jiro (also spelled and pronounced as Ziro) valley, a small town in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, India, at some undefined time in the past. In 1947, Professor Christopher von Furer-Haimendorf was the first westerner to be told about the Buru. By that time, the animals had reportedly already become extinct in the valley. According to the Apatani elders, when their forefathers migrated to Jiro valley, the valley was primarily a marsh which was populated by Burus. The Apatani people decided to settle in the valley because of its fertility and good climate. But every now and then they would have confrontations with burus. So they decided to drain the marsh of its water and thus eliminate the Burus. Most of the Burus died because of the drainage, and many supposedly went underground into the springs. The last Buru was said to be reported by a young woman, who sighted it in a spring one night while she was drawing water. The startled lady told her father about the incident. The next day the whole village helped fill the spring with stones and clay.

Identity

Traditionally, there has been speculation that the Buru was an unidentified member of the order crocodylia. Tellingly, crocodiles or alligators are also called "Buru" by the Apatanis. There is large population of crocodiles which live in caves in North Africa, quite far from open water, so an underground existence is not improbable for persecuted Indian crocodiles. The mere fact that crocodylians are called "Buru" may not be very significant, since the Buru is described with monitor-like characteristics such as an elongated neck and a forked tongue. The native name of the Komodo dragon is "Land Crocodile". Both Bernard Heuvelmans, and Roy Mackal regard the Buru to be a large Komodo dragon-like monitor lizard, and there are fossils of such a creature to be found in the Indian subcontinent. Heuvelmans notes similar reported creatures from Western India under the name of "jhoors" where they seem to merge into the Iranian traditional dragon or ahi (Azi Dahaka), which in Iranian art is basically a local stylistic adaptation of the Chinese dragon. George Eberhart notes rumors of a similar creature in the Tigris marshes of Iraq, called the afa, possibly the same thing as ahi. Heuvelmans also notes in his checklist of unknown animals that similar reports to the buru also come from Burma, and they might also relate to a reported lizard-like Meikong River monster.

Cryptozoologist Karl Shuker claims that the Buru was a giant lungfish noting that this provides a far more comprehensive, comparable match not only in terms of morphology but also with regard to behaviour. Shuker believes this explains the Buru's alleged ability to survive hidden at the bottom of lakes during the dry season. Shuker's view admittedly does nothing to account for the various other buru-like creatures as cited in this article. It also does not account for the specified features of the long neck and forked tongue.



Buru

Chupacabra

The Chupacabra (from *chupar* "to suck" and *cabra* "goat", literally "goat sucker") is a legendary cryptid rumored to inhabit parts of the Americas. It is associated more recently with sightings of an allegedly unknown animal in Puerto Rico (where these sightings were first reported), Mexico, and the United States, especially in the latter's Latin American communities. The name comes from the animal's reported habit of attacking and drinking the blood of livestock, especially goats.

Physical descriptions of the creature vary. Eyewitness sightings have been claimed as early as 1995 in Puerto Rico, and have since been reported as far north as Maine, and as far south as Chile, and even being spotted outside the Americas in countries like Russia and The Philippines. It is supposedly a heavy creature, the size of a small bear, with a row of spines reaching from the neck to the base of the tail.

Sighting reports of the Chupacabra have been disregarded as uncorroborated or lacking evidence, while most reports in northern Mexico and the southern United States have been verified as canids afflicted by mange. Biologists and wildlife management officials view the chupacabra as a contemporary legend.

History

The first reported attacks occurred in March 1995 in Puerto Rico. In this attack, eight sheep were discovered dead, each with three puncture wounds in the chest area and completely drained of blood. A few months later, in August, an eyewitness, Madelyne Tolentino, reported seeing the creature in the Puerto Rican town of Canóvanas, when as many as 150 farm animals and pets were reportedly killed. In 1975, similar killings in the small town of Moca, were attributed to *El Vampiro de Moca* (The Vampire of Moca). Initially, it was suspected that the killings were committed by a Satanic cult; later more killings were reported around the island, and many farms reported loss of animal life. Each of the animals were reported to have had their bodies bled dry through a series of small circular incisions.

Puerto Rican comedian and entrepreneur Silverio Pérez is credited with coining the term *chupacabras* soon after the first incidents were reported in the press. Shortly after the first reported incidents in Puerto Rico, other animal deaths were reported in other countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Brazil, United States, and Mexico.



Chupacabra

Appearance

The most common description of chupacabras is a reptile-like creature, appearing to have leathery or scaly greenish-gray skin and sharp spines or quills running down its back. This form stands approximately 3 to 4 feet (1 to 1.2 m) high, and stands and hops in a similar fashion to a kangaroo. In at least one sighting, the creature was reported to hop 20 feet (6 m). It is said to hiss and screech when alarmed, as well as leave behind a sulfuric stench. When it screeches, some reports assert that the chupacabras' eyes glow an unusual red which gives the witnesses nausea.

Another description of chupacabras, although not as common, describes a strange breed of wild dog. This form is mostly hairless and has a pronounced spinal ridge, unusually pronounced eye sockets, fangs, and claws. It is claimed that this breed might be an example of a dog-like reptile. Unlike conventional predators, the chupacabra is said to drain all of the animal's blood through three holes in the shape of an upside-down triangle or through one or two holes.



Dover Demon

The Dover Demon is an alleged cryptozoological creature sighted on three separate occasions during a 25-hour period in the town of Dover, Massachusetts on April 21 and April 22, 1977. It has remained a subject of interest for cryptozoologists ever since then. Cryptozoologist Loren Coleman was the initial investigator and the individual who named the creature the Dover Demon; it was disseminated by the press, and the name stuck. Coleman quickly assembled and brought into the inquiry three other investigators: Joseph Nyman, Ed Fogg, and Walter Webb. All were well-known ufological researchers in eastern Massachusetts, with Webb being the assistant director of the Hayden Planetarium at Boston's Science Museum. Coleman did not feel he was necessarily dealing with a ufological phenomenon, but he wanted to have seasoned investigators with good interviewing skills to do a comprehensive examination of the eyewitnesses and their families, as well as law enforcement, educational, and community members.

History

The Dover Demon was first seen outside near a bar by three seventeen-year-old boys who were driving through the Massachusetts area when the car's headlights illuminated it. Bill Bartlett, the driver, reported that he saw what he thought at first was a dog or a cat, but upon closer inspection realized that it was a bizarre, unearthly-looking creature crawling along a stone wall on Farm Street.

Bartlett continued to watch the creature, and he reported it to have a disproportionately large, watermelon-shaped head and illuminated orange eyes, like glass marbles. It had long, thin arms and legs with slender fingers, which it used to grasp onto the pavement. It was hairless and had rough, flesh-toned skin, described as tan and sandpaper-like. The creature's appearance was very plain, with no nose or ears, and no mouth was seen. The witness drawings portray its head as having a skull shape, forming the contour of a circle on top with a more elliptical ending projecting down to include where the nose and mouth would be.

Other witnesses have claimed the creature had green eyes and seemingly smooth, chalky gray toned skin, three feet tall, and made a bloodcurdling noise, similar to a hawk's screech combined with a snake's hiss. But all witnesses say it had no ears, mouth, nose, or known sex.

The creature was sighted again an hour later, by John Baxter, 15, and Pete Mitchell, 13, as they were walking home.

He said it was bipedal and ended up running into a gully and standing next to a tree. The next day, Abby Brabham, 15, and Will Traintor, 18, driving down Springdale Avenue, claimed to have seen a similar-looking creature from Traintor's car, on the side of the road. Brabham's description matched Bartlett's and Baxter's descriptions, except this time the cryptid had illuminated green eyes. She approximated its height as "about the size of a goat". Investigators attempted to shake up Ms. Brabham by noting she said it had green eyes reflected by car headlights, while Bartlett mentioned orange eyes were reflected back to him by his automobile's lights. Ms. Brabham was steadfast in her description.

Bartlett, Baxter, Brabham, and Traintor all drew sketches of the monstrous sight shortly after their sightings. On the piece of paper that includes Bartlett's sketch, he wrote "I, Bill Bartlett, swear on a stack of Bibles that I saw this creature." The widespread interest in the Dover Demon has resulted in it being an oft-discussed cryptid in popular culture, and having Japanese figurines of the creature being developed for cryptobuffs in Japan and North America.



Gigantic Octopus

An unknown species of gigantic octopus has been hypothesised as a source of reports of sea monsters such as the lusca and the kraken as well as the source of some of the carcasses of unidentified origin known as globsters like the St. Augustine Monster. The species that the St. Augustine carcass supposedly represented has been assigned the binomial names "Octopus giganteus" and "Otoctopus giganteus". They are not to be confused with the known giant Pacific octopus, which is a member of the genus *Enteroctopus*, and can grow to a total length of more than 6 m (20 ft). The gigantic octopus is assumed to be much larger.

History

In 1802, the French malacologist Pierre Denys de Montfort in *Histoire Naturelle Générale et Particulière des Mollusques*, an encyclopedic description of mollusks, recognized the existence of two kinds of giant octopus. One being the kraken octopus, which Denys de Montfort believed had been described not only by Norwegian sailors and American whalers, but also by ancient writers such as Pliny the Elder. The second one being the much larger colossal octopus which reportedly attacked a sailing vessel from Saint-Malo off the coast of Angola.

A gigantic octopus has been proposed as an identity for the large carcass, known as the St. Augustine Monster, that washed up in St Augustine, Florida in 1896. However, samples of this specimen subjected to electron microscopy and biochemical analysis were found to be "masses of virtually pure collagen" and not to have the "biochemical characteristics of invertebrate collagen, nor the collagen fiber arrangement of octopus mantle". The results suggest the samples are "large pieces of vertebrate skin ... from a huge homeotherm".

Appearance and origins

Since the late 18th century, kraken have been depicted in a number of ways, primarily as large octopus-like creatures, and it has often been alleged that Pontopidan's kraken might have been based on sailors' observations of the giant squid. In the earliest descriptions, however, the creatures were more crab-like than octopus-like, and generally possessed traits that are associated with large whales rather than with giant squid. Some traits of kraken resemble undersea volcanic activity occurring in the Iceland region, including bubbles of water; sudden, dangerous currents; and appearance of new islets.



Jersey Devil

The Jersey Devil is a legendary creature said to inhabit the Pine Barrens of Southern New Jersey, United States. The creature is often described as a flying biped with hooves, but there are many different variations. The most common description is that of a kangaroo-like creature with the head of a goat, leathery bat-like wings, horns, small arms with clawed hands, cloven hooves and a forked tail. It has been reported to move quickly as to avoid human contact, and often is described as emitting a "blood-curdling scream."

History

There are many possible origins of the Jersey Devil legend. The earliest legends date back to Native American folklore. The Lenni Lenape tribes called the area around Pine Barrens "Popuessing", meaning "place of the dragon".[3] Swedish explorers later named it "Drake Kill", "drake" being a Swedish word for dragon, and "kil" meaning channel or arm of the sea (river, stream, etc.)

The most accepted origin of the story, as far as New Jerseyans are concerned, started with Mother Leeds and is as follows:

"It was said that Mother Leeds had 13 children and, after giving birth to her 12th child, stated that if she had another, it would be the Devil. In 1735, Mother Leeds was in labor on a stormy night. Gathered around her were her friends. Mother Leeds was supposedly a witch and the child's father was the Devil himself. The child was born normal, but then changed form. It changed from a normal baby to a creature with hooves, a horse's head, bat wings and a forked tail. It growled and screamed, then killed the midwife before flying up the chimney. It circled the villages and headed toward the pines. In 1740 a clergy exorcised the demon for 100 years and it wasn't seen again until 1890.

"Mother Leeds" has been identified by some as Deborah Leeds. This identification may have gained credence from the fact that Deborah Leeds' husband, Japhet Leeds, named twelve children in the will he wrote in 1736,[6] which is compatible with the legend of the Jersey Devil being the thirteenth child born by Mother Leeds. Deborah and Japhet Leeds also lived in the Leeds Point section of what is now Atlantic County, New Jersey, which is the area commonly said to be the location of the Jersey Devil story.

Reported encounters

There have been many sightings and occurrences allegedly involving the Jersey Devil. According to legend, while visiting the Hanover Mill Works to inspect his cannonballs being forged, Commodore Stephen Decatur sighted a flying creature flapping its wings and fired a cannonball directly upon it to no effect.

Joseph Bonaparte, eldest brother of Emperor Napoleon, is also said to have witnessed the Jersey Devil while hunting on his Bordentown estate around 1820. In 1840, the devil was blamed for several livestock killings. Similar attacks were reported in 1841, accompanied by tracks and screams.

Claims of a corpse matching the Leeds Devil's description arose in Greenwich in December 1925. A local farmer shot an unidentified animal as it attempted to steal his chickens. Afterward, he claimed that none of 100 people he showed it to could identify it. On July 27, 1937 an unknown animal "with red eyes" seen by residents of Downingtown, Pennsylvania was compared to the Jersey Devil by a reporter for the Pennsylvania Bulletin. In 1951, a group of Gibbstown, New Jersey boys claimed to have seen a 'monster' matching the Devil's description. and claims of a corpse matching the Jersey Devil's description arose in 1957. In 1960, tracks and noises heard near Mays Landing were claimed to be from the Jersey Devil. During the same year the merchants around Camden offered a \$10,000 reward for the capture of the Jersey Devil, even offering to build a private zoo to house the creature if captured.

During the week of January 16 through 23, 1909, newspapers of the time published hundreds of claimed encounters with the Jersey Devil from all over the state. Among alleged encounters publicized that week were claims the creature "attacked" a trolley car in Haddon Heights and a social club in Camden. Police in Camden and Bristol, Pennsylvania supposedly fired on the creature to no effect. Other reports initially concerned unidentified footprints in the snow, but soon sightings of creatures resembling the Jersey Devil were being reported throughout South Jersey and as far away as Delaware. The widespread newspaper coverage led to a panic throughout the Delaware Valley prompting a number of schools to close and workers to stay home. During this period, it is rumored that the Philadelphia Zoo posted a \$10,000 reward for the creature's capture. The offer prompted a variety of hoaxes, including a kangaroo with artificial wings.

Explanations

Skeptics believe the Jersey Devil to be nothing more than a creative manifestation of the English settlers, created and told by bored Pine Barren residents as a form of children's entertainment. According to Brian Dunning of Skeptoid, folk tales of the Jersey Devil prior to 1909 calling it the "Leeds Devil" may have been created to discredit local politician Daniel Leeds who served as deputy to the colonial governor of New York and New Jersey in the 1700s. Jeff Brunner of the Humane Society of New Jersey thinks the Sandhill Crane is the basis of the Jersey Devil stories, adding, "There are no photographs, no bones, no hard evidence whatsoever, and worst of all, no explanation of its origins that doesn't require belief in the supernatural." Outdoorsman and author Tom Brown, Jr. spent several seasons living in the wilderness of the Pine Barrens. He recounts occasions when terrified hikers mistook him for the Jersey Devil, after he covered his whole body with mud to repel mosquitoes.



Jersey Devil

Kongamoto

The Kongamoto ("breaker of boats") is a reported pterosaur-like creature said to have been seen by natives and explorers in the Mwinilunga district's Jiundu swamps of Western Zambia, Angola and Congo. Suggested identities include a modern-day Rhamphorhynchus (pterosaurs lived in the area of Africa where Kongamoto has been sighted), a misidentified bird (such as the very large and peculiar Saddle-billed Stork), or a giant bat. No photos or footage have been taken, leaving most of the stories to rely on large wounds and eyewitness accounts.

History

Frank Melland, in his 1923 book *In Witchbound Africa*, describes it as living along certain rivers, and very dangerous, often attacking small boats, and anybody who disturbed the creature. They are typically described as either red or black in color, with a wingspan of 4 to 7 feet. Members of the local Kaonde tribe identified it as similar to a pterosaur after being shown a picture from Melland's book collection.

In 1956 an engineer, J.P.F. Brown, allegedly saw the creature at Fort Rosebery near Lake Bangweulu in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). It was about 6:00 p.m. when he saw two creatures flying slowly and silently directly overhead. He observed that they looked prehistoric. He estimated a wingspan of about 3 to 3 1/2 feet (0.91 to 1.1 meters) and a beak-to-tail length of about 4 1/2 feet (1.4 meters). It reportedly had a long thin tail, and a narrow head which he likened to an elongated snout of a dog.

The following year, at a hospital at Fort Rosebery, a patient came in with a severe wound in his chest, claiming that a large bird-like creature had attacked him in the Bangweulu swamps. When asked to draw the creature, he allegedly drew a creature resembling a pterosaur. This drawing does not appear to have survived to the present.

It is curious to note that the area concerned is advertised as a prime birdwatching site, but this large, flying animal seems not to have been reported by any visiting birdwatchers. There are reports of similar creatures from Angola, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Tanzania and Kenya. The kongamoto may be related to what is called a "flying snake" in Namibia.

Description

The Kongamato has been seen by African natives and European explorers for some time, and almost all of the accounts say it is a reddish blackish creature resembling a pterosaur. Other people have come back with large, deep wounds that they claim to be from the Kongamato. Eyewitness accounts say the creature has teeth, leathery wings, a beak, and claws. Some British scientists and explorers have shown natives drawings of pterosaurs, and the natives were said to have a terrified reaction.

Skeptics of the creature claim the Kongamato is a hoax or a misidentification of a huge bat or a stork. However, believers think that the beast has never been caught on film because as it supposedly lives in the thick vegetation of African swamps, there is not a good way to get a clear photo. If the Kongamato is real, there is likely more than one. Since the Kongamato was supposed to come up from underwater and upset canoes, the suggestion has also been made that the name originally referred to a freshwater stingray.



Kongamato

Loch Ness Monster

The Loch Ness Monster is a cryptid that is reputed to inhabit Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands. It is similar to other supposed lake monsters in Scotland and elsewhere, though its description varies from one account to the next. Popular interest and belief in the animal has varied since it was brought to the world's attention in 1933. Evidence of its existence is anecdotal, with minimal and much-disputed photographic material and sonar readings.

The most common speculation among believers is that the creature represents a line of long-surviving plesiosaurs. The scientific community regards the Loch Ness Monster as a modern-day myth, and explains sightings as a mix of hoaxes and wishful thinking. Despite this, it remains one of the most famous examples of cryptozoology. The legendary monster has been affectionately referred to by the nickname Nessie since the 1950s.

History

The term "monster" was reportedly applied for the first time to the creature on 2 May 1933 by Alex Campbell, the water bailiff for Loch Ness and a part-time journalist, in a report in the *Inverness Courier*. On 4 August 1933, the *Courier* published as a full news item the assertion of a London man, George Spicer, that a few weeks earlier while motoring around the Loch, he and his wife had seen "the nearest approach to a dragon or pre-historic animal that I have ever seen in my life", trundling across the road toward the Loch carrying "an animal" in its mouth. Other letters began appearing in the *Courier*, often anonymously, with claims of land or water sightings, either on the writer's part or on the parts of family, acquaintances or stories they remembered being told. These stories soon reached the national (and later the international) press, which described a "monster fish", "sea serpent", or "dragon", eventually settling on "Loch Ness Monster".

On 6 December 1933 the first purported photograph of the monster, taken by Hugh Gray, was published in the *Daily Express*, and shortly after the creature received official notice when the Secretary of State for Scotland ordered the police to prevent any attacks on it. In 1934, interest was further sparked by what is known as The Surgeon's Photograph. In the same year R. T. Gould published a book, the first of many that describe the author's personal investigation and collected record of additional reports pre-dating 1933. Other authors have claimed that sightings of the monster go as far back as the 6th century.



Loch Ness Monster

With all of the eyewitness sightings, photographs and films, we are still left to speculate what the Loch Ness Monster truly is. There are numerous theories on what the creature is, but each one has its flaws. Undoubtedly the most common theory as to the identity of Nessie is a breeding population of ancient plesiosaur. But there are other theories that are as equally plausible as the plesiosaur theory.

The Evidence

There is no actual physical evidence of the existence of the Loch Ness Monster. Amateur Video's, questionable photographs and eye witness testimony is all that exists to this day in regard to the creature. Some of the photo evidence, especially the ones shot by the underwater cameras during the 1970's expedition led by Dr. Robert Rines, do seem to show evidence of a large, aquatic creature dwelling in the depths of Loch Ness. Some would argue that the cold water of Loch Ness would not allow the existence of a large cold blooded reptile, while others claim that the it would support an ancient warm blooded whale species just fine.



Mothman

Mothman is a legendary creature first reportedly seen in the Point Pleasant area of West Virginia from 15 November 1966 to 15 December 1967. The first newspaper report was published in the Point Pleasant Register dated 16 November 1966, entitled "Couples See Man-Sized Bird...Creature...Something".

Mothman was introduced to a wider audience by Gray Barker in 1970, later popularized by John Keel in his 1975 book *The Mothman Prophecies*, claiming that Mothman was related to a wide array of supernatural events in the area and the collapse of the Silver Bridge.

History

On Nov. 15, 1966, two young couples from Point Pleasant, Roger and Linda Scarborough, and Steve and Mary Mallette told the police they saw a large creature whose eyes "glowed red" when the car headlights picked it up. They described it as a "flying man with ten foot wings" following their car while they were driving in an area of town known as 'the TNT area', the site of a former World War II munitions plant.

During the next few days, other people reported similar sightings. Two volunteer firemen who sighted it said it was a "large bird with red eyes". Contractor Newell Partridge told Johnson that when he aimed a flashlight at a creature in a nearby field its eyes glowed "like bicycle reflectors", and blamed buzzing noises from his television set and the disappearance of his German Shepherd dog on the creature. Wildlife biologist Dr. Robert L. Smith at West Virginia University told reporters that descriptions and sightings all fit the Sandhill Crane, a large American crane almost as high as a man with a seven foot wingspan featuring circles of reddish coloring around the eyes, and that the bird may have wandered out of its migration route.

There were no Mothman reports in the immediate aftermath of the December 15, 1967 collapse of the Silver Bridge and the death of 46 people, giving rise to legends that the Mothman sightings and the bridge collapse were connected. Some cryptozoologists believe that Mothman was an alien, a supernatural manifestation, or an unknown cryptid. In his 1975 book *The Mothman Prophecies*, author John Keel claimed that the Point Pleasant residents experienced precognitions including premonitions of the collapse of the Silver Bridge, unidentified flying object sightings, visits from mysterious or threatening men in black, and other bizarre phenomena. However, Keel has been criticized for distorting established data, and for gullibility.



Sea Serpents

A sea serpent or sea dragon is a type of sea monster either wholly or partly serpentine. Sightings of sea serpents have been reported for hundreds of years, and continue to be claimed today. Cryptozoologist Bruce Champagne identified more than 1,200 purported sea serpent sightings. It is currently believed that the sightings can be best explained as known animals such as oarfish, whales, or sharks (in particular, the frilled shark). Some cryptozoologists have suggested that the sea serpents are relict plesiosaurs, mosasaurs or other Mesozoic marine reptiles, an idea often associated with lake monsters such as the Loch Ness Monster.

In mythology

In Norse mythology, Jörmungandr, or "Midgarðsormr" was a sea serpent so long that it encircled the entire world, Midgard. Some stories report of sailors mistaking its back for a chain of islands. Sea serpents also appear frequently in later Scandinavian folklore, particularly in that of Norway.

In 1028 AD, Saint Olaf is said to have killed a sea serpent in Valldal, Norway, throwing its body onto the mountain Syltefjellet. Marks on the mountain are associated with the legend. In Swedish ecclesiastic and writer Olaus Magnus's *Carta marina*, many marine monsters of varied form, including an immense sea serpent, appear. Moreover, in his 1555 work *History of the Northern Peoples*, Magnus gives the following description of a Norwegian sea serpent:

Those who sail up along the coast of Norway to trade or to fish, all tell the remarkable story of how a serpent of fearsome size, 200 feet long and 20 feet wide, resides in rifts and caves outside Bergen. On bright summer nights this serpent leaves the caves to eat calves, lambs and pigs, or it fares out to the sea and feeds on marine animals. It has long hair hanging from its neck, sharp black scales and flaming red eyes. It attacks vessels, grabs and swallows people, as it lifts itself up like a column from the water.

Sea serpents were known to seafaring cultures in the Mediterranean and Near East, appearing in both mythology (the Babylonian Labbu) and in apparent eyewitness accounts (Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*). In the *Aeneid*, a pair of sea serpents killed Laocoön and his sons when Laocoön argued against bringing the Trojan Horse into Troy.

In the Bible

The Bible refers to Leviathan and Rahab, from the Hebrew Tanakh, although 'great creatures of the sea' (NIV) are also mentioned in Book of Genesis 1:21. In the Book of Amos 9:3 speaks of a serpent to bite the people who try to hide in the sea from God.



Notable cases

Hans Egede, the national saint of Greenland, gives an 18th century descriptions of a sea serpent. On 6 July 1734 his ship sailed past the coast of Greenland when suddenly those on board "saw a most terrible creature, resembling nothing they saw before. The monster lifted its head so high that it seemed to be higher than the crow's nest on the mainmast. The head was small and the body short and wrinkled. The unknown creature was using giant fins which propelled it through the water. Later the sailors saw its tail as well. The monster was longer than our whole ship", wrote Egede.

Sea serpent sightings on the coast of New England, are documented beginning in 1638. An incident in August 1817 spawned a rather silly mix-up when a committee of the New England Linnaean Society went so far as to give a deformed terrestrial snake the name *Scoliophis atlanticus*, believing it was the juvenile form of a sea serpent that had recently been reported in Gloucester Harbor. The Gloucester Harbor serpent was claimed to have been seen by hundreds of New England residents, including the crews of four whaling boats that reportedly sought out the serpent in the harbor. Rife with political undertones, the serpent was known in the harbor region as "Embargo." Sworn statements made before a local Justice of the Peace and first published in 1818 were never recanted. After the Linnaean Society's misidentification was discovered, it was frequently cited by debunkers as evidence that the creature did not exist.

A particularly famous sea serpent sighting was made by the men and officers of HMS *Daedalus* in August 1848 during a voyage to Saint Helena in the South Atlantic; the creature they saw, some 60 feet (18 m) long, held a peculiar maned head above the water. The sighting caused quite a stir in the London papers, and Sir Richard Owen, the famous English biologist, proclaimed the beast an elephant seal. Other explanations for the sighting proposed that it was actually an upside-down canoe, or a posing giant squid.

Another sighting took place in 1905 off the coast of Brazil. The crew of the *Valhalla* and two naturalists, Michael J. Nicoll and E. G. B. Meade-Waldo, saw a long-necked, turtle headed creature, with a large dorsal fin. Based on its dorsal fin and the shape of its head, some (such as Bernard Heuvelmans) have suggested that the animal was some sort of marine mammal. A skeptical suggestion is that the sighting was of a posing giant squid, but this is hard to accept given that squids do not swim with their fins or arms protruding from the water.

On April 25, 1977, the Japanese trawler *Zuiyo Maru*, sailing east of Christchurch, New Zealand, caught a strange, unknown creature in the trawl. Photographs and tissue specimens were taken. While initially identified as a prehistoric plesiosaur, analysis later indicated that the body was the carcass of a basking shark.

Storsjöodjuret

Storsjöodjuret is a lake monster reported to live in the 300-foot-deep (91 m) lake Storsjön in Jämtland in the middle of Sweden. The lake monster was first reported in 1635 and is the only one of its kind in Sweden. When the only city located by Storsjön, Östersund, celebrated its 200 year anniversary in 1986 Storsjöodjuret along with its offspring and nest became protected by law, a law which was revoked in 2005.

History

The first description of a sea creature in Storsjön was made in a folklorist tale by vicar Morgens Pedersen in 1635.

"A long, long time ago two trolls, Jata and Kata, stood on the shores of the Great-Lake brewing a concoction in their cauldrons. They brewed and mixed and added to the liquid for days and weeks and years. They knew not what would result from their brew but they wondered about it a great deal. One evening there was heard a strange sound from one of their cauldrons. There was a wailing, a groaning and a crying, then suddenly came a loud bang. A strange animal with a black serpentine body and a cat-like head jumped out of the cauldron and disappeared into the lake. The monster enjoyed living in the lake, grew unbelievably larger and awakened terror among the people whenever it appeared. Finally, it extended all the way round the island of Frösön, and could even bite its own tail. Ketil Runske bound the mighty monster with a strong spell which was carved on a stone and raised on the island of Frösön. The serpent was pictured on the stone. Thus was the spell to be tied till the day someone came who could read and understand the inscription on the stone."

Another legend was written down by the prolocutor Andreas Plantin in an inquiry in 1685. "It is said that beneath this [rune]stone lies a dreadfully large head of a serpent and that the body stretches over Storsjön to Knytta by and Hille Sand where the tail is buried. The serpent was called a rå and therefore shall this stone be risen. Since no one peacefully could cross [Storsjön], the ferryman and his wife states, along with many others, that in the last turbulent time this stone was tore down and broken in two. As long as this stone laid on the ground many strange things occurred in the water, until the stone was risen and assembled anew."

The runestone both texts refer to is the Frösö Runestone, the northern-most raised runestone in the World. However while a large serpent is indeed pictured on the stone there is no reference about it nor "Ketil Runske" in the text itself, which instead tells about Austmaðr, Guðfastr's son's christening of Jämtland. Though it has indeed been broken in two pieces.

Description

Storsjöodjuret is described as a serpentine or aquatic creature with fins across its back and the head of a dog. It is reported to measure approximately six meters long, and some accounts describe it as having several humps.

Capture

Common interest in the creature was sparked first in the 1890s. After several sightings, an enterprise of locals was founded to catch the monster, even drawing the support from king Oscar II. Since then hundreds of monster sightings have been made. No scientific results have been made, but the supporters have never lost their faith. In August 2008 a group of filmers claimed to have captured Storsjöodjuret on film. The cameras showed red so it was something warm that was filmed. In 1986, the Jämtland county administrative board declared the Storsjöodjuret to be an endangered species and granted it protected status. However, it was removed from the list in November 2005.



Storsjöodjuret

Thunderbird

Thunderbird is a term used in cryptozoology to describe large, bird-like creatures, generally identified with the Thunderbird of Native American tradition. Similar cryptids reported in the Old World are often called Rocs. Thunderbirds are regarded by a small number of researchers as having lizard features like the extinct pterosaurs such as Pteranodon. Reports of Thunderbird sightings go back centuries, and the fossil record does show that giant birds (teratorns) with wingspans between 12 and 18 ft (3.7 and 5.5 m) were likely contemporary with early man. Today the creature is generally regarded as a myth.

This article deals with modern sightings (the last 200 years) of such a creature, reported as real, as opposed to mythological accounts, though believers in the phenomenon often use the Native American legends in attempts to support their claims.

History

There is a story that in April 1890, two cowboys in Arizona killed a giant bird-like creature with an enormous wingspan. It was said to have had smooth skin, featherless wings like a bat and a face that resembled an alligator. This description has some similarity to that of a prehistoric pterodactyl, an animal whose existence was known at the time. They are supposed to have dragged the carcass back to town, where it was pinned with wings outstretched across the entire length of a barn. A picture of this event may have been published in the local newspaper, the Tombstone Epitaph. Cryptozoology.com has an account of this story with the events taking place in the state of Texas.

According to Mark Hall, the Epitaph did indeed print a story about the capture of a large, unusual winged creature, on April 26, 1890. Beyond this single story, however, no one has made historic corroboration that this event ever occurred; it is usually considered an urban legend. Utterly fictional tall tales were not an uncommon feature in newspapers during this era.

No one has ever produced a copy of the "Thunderbird" photograph, though numerous people, Ivan T. Sanderson being one of the better known, have made claims to its existence. Sanderson claimed to have once owned a copy of the photo, which vanished after he loaned it to an acquaintance in the 1960s. The television program *Freaky Links* staged a similar photo, giving new life to the "Thunderbird Photograph" legend.

Jerome Clark speculates that the description of the basic image in question (men standing alongside a winged creature nailed to a barn), is evocative enough to implant a sort of false memory, leading some people to vaguely "remember" seeing the photo at some distant, imprecise time.



Thunderbird

Sightings

On April 10, 1948, three individuals in Overland, Illinois spotted what they originally thought to be a passing plane, but after seeing a large set of flapping wings, they realized this "plane" was something very different. A few weeks later, in Alton, Illinois, a man and his son saw what they described as an enormous bird creature with a body shaped like a naval torpedo. The creature was flying at at least 500 feet and cast a shadow the same size as a small passenger airplane. There was a spike in Thunderbird sightings in the late twentieth century. On occasion, such reports were accompanied by large footprints or other purported evidence. Among the most controversial reports is a July 25, 1977 account from Lawndale, Illinois. A group of three boys were at play in a residential back yard when two large birds approached, and chased the boys. Two escaped unharmed, but the third boy, ten-year-old Marlon Lowe, did not. One of the birds reportedly clamped his shoulder with its claws, then lifted Lowe about two feet off the ground, carrying him some distance. Lowe fought against the bird, which then released him.



The descriptions given by the witnesses of these birds match that of an Andean condor: a large black bird, with a white ringed neck and a wingspan up to 10 feet (3 m). However, an Andean condor's talons are not strong enough to lift heavy objects.[citation needed] Loren Coleman and his brother Jerry interviewed several witnesses after the reported event. In 2002, a sighting of a large birdlike creature, with a wingspan of around 14 feet (4.3 m), was reported in Alaska. The witnesses described the creature like something out of the movie Jurassic Park. Scientists suggested the giant bird may have simply been a Steller's sea eagle, which have a wingspan of 6–8 feet (1.8–2.4 m). There had also been previous reports of similar creatures in the same area around that time. As recently as 2007, sightings have been claimed in the area around San Antonio, Texas.

Analysis

Cryptozoologists have theorized the ancient Thunderbird myth to be based on sightings of a real animal with a mistaken assessment of its apparent size. Some skeptics have claimed such a large bird could never have flown, but several flying creatures with huge wingspans are indeed known. The prehistoric vulture-like *Argentavis magnificens* had a wingspan of around 7 m (23 ft) and was capable of flight. The massive Cretaceous-era pterosaur *Quetzalcoatlus northropi* was the largest known flying creature in history, with a wingspan of around 12 m (40 ft). However, the Thunderbird's identity as a pterosaur is unlikely because the pterosaur is extinct. San Antonio based cryptozoologist Ken Gerhard believes it is a teratorm.

Cryptozoologists also posit that the Thunderbird was associated with storms because they followed the drafts to stay in flight, not unlike the way a modern eagle rides mountain up currents. Cryptozoologist John Keel claims to have mapped several Thunderbird sightings and found that they corresponded chronologically and geographically with storms moving across the United States.

Angelo P. Capparella, an ornithologist at Illinois State University, argues that the existence of such undiscovered large birds is highly unlikely, especially in North America. There is not enough food, Capparella says, in many areas where abnormally large birds are reported. Perhaps more important, according to Capparella, is the lack of sightings by "the legions of competent birdwatchers ... scanning the skies of the U.S. and Canada" who sometimes make "surprising observations" with cameras at the ready (see for example 20th-century sightings of the Eskimo Curlew). Were there breeding populations of large, unknown birds, Capparella contends they could not remain unknown very long.

There is one genus of extinct flightless-birds from the Americas that has been named *Brontornis*, whose name literally means "thunder-bird"; however few, if any, cryptozoologists regard this bird as the origin of the Thunderbird because of its flightlessness.

Yeti

The Yeti or Abominable Snowman is said to be an ape-like cryptid taller than an average human, similar to Bigfoot, that inhabits the Himalayan region of Nepal, and Tibet. The names Yeti and Meh-Teh are commonly used by the people indigenous to the region, and are part of their history and mythology. Stories of the Yeti first emerged as a facet of Western popular culture in the 19th century.

The scientific community generally regards the Yeti as a legend, given the lack of conclusive evidence, but it remains one of the most famous creatures of cryptozoology. The Yeti may be considered a sort of parallel myth to the Bigfoot of North America.

History

According to H. Siiger, the Yeti was a part of the pre-Buddhist beliefs of several Himalayan people. He was told that the Lepcha people worshipped a "Glacier Being" as a God of the Hunt. He also reported that followers of the Bön religion once believed the blood of the "mi rgod" or "wild man" had use in certain mystical ceremonies. The being was depicted as an apelike creature who carries a large stone as a weapon and makes a whistling swoosh sound. In 1832, James Prinsep's *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* published trekker B. H. Hodgson's account of his experiences in northern Nepal. His local guides spotted a tall, bipedal creature covered with long dark hair, which seemed to flee in fear.

An early record of reported footprints appeared in 1899 in Laurence Waddell's *Among the Himalayas*. Waddell reported his guide's description of a large apelike creature that left the prints, which Waddell thought were made by a bear.

Western interest in the Yeti peaked dramatically in the 1950s. While attempting to scale Mount Everest in 1951, Eric Shipton took photographs of a number of large prints in the snow, at about 6,000 m (20,000 ft) above sea level. These photos have been subject to intense scrutiny and debate. Some argue they are the best evidence of Yeti's existence, while others contend the prints are those of a mundane creature that have been distorted by the melting snow.

There is a famous Yeti hoax, known as the Snow Walker Film. The footage was created for Paramount's UPN show, *Paranormal Borderland*, ostensibly by the show's producers. The show ran from 12 March to 6 August 1996. Fox purchased and used the footage in their later program on *The World's Greatest Hoaxes*.



Yeti

Explanations

Misidentification of Himalayan wildlife has been proposed as an explanation for some Yeti sightings, including the Chu-Teh, a Langur monkey living at lower altitudes, the Tibetan blue bear, the Himalayan brown bear or Dzu-Teh, also known as the Himalayan red bear. Some have also suggested the Yeti could actually be a human hermit.

In 1986, South Tyrolean mountaineer Reinhold Messner claimed to have a face-to-face encounter with a Yeti. He wrote a book, *My Quest for the Yeti*, and claims to have killed one. According to Messner, the Yeti is actually the endangered Himalayan brown bear, *Ursus arctos isabellinus*, which can walk both upright or on all fours.

The 1983 Barun Valley discoveries prompted three years of research on the 'tree bear' possibility by Taylor, Fleming, John Craighead and Tirtha Shrestha. From that research the conclusion was that the Asiatic Black Bear, when about two years old, spends much time in trees to avoid attack by larger male bears on the ground ('ground bears'). During this tree period that may last two years, young bears train their inner claw outward, allowing an opposable grip. The imprint in the snow of a hind paw coming over the front paw that appears to have a hallux, especially when the bear is going slightly uphill so the hind paw print extends the overprint backward makes a hominoid-appearing track, both in that it is elongated like a human foot but with a "thumb" and in that a four-footed animal's gait now appears bipedal.

In 2003, Japanese researcher and mountaineer Dr. Makoto Nebuka published the results of his twelve-year linguistic study, postulating that the word "Yeti" is a corruption of the word "meti", a regional dialect term for a "bear". Nebuka claims that ethnic Tibetans fear and worship the bear as a supernatural being. Nebuka's claims were subject to almost immediate criticism, and he was accused of linguistic carelessness. Dr. Raj Kumar Pandey, who has researched both Yetis and mountain languages, said "it is not enough to blame tales of the mysterious beast of the Himalayas on words that rhyme but mean different things."

Some speculate these reported creatures could be present-day specimens of the extinct giant ape *Gigantopithecus*. However, the Yeti is generally described as bipedal, and most scientists believe *Gigantopithecus* to have been quadrupedal, and so massive that, unless it evolved specifically as a bipedal ape (like *Oreopithecus* and the hominids), walking upright would have been even more difficult for the now extinct primate than it is for its extant quadrupedal relative, the orangutan.



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Yeti, The Loch Ness Monster, Mothman - are the names of only a few of the mysterious animals that have been captivating the imagination of people for years, decades and centuries. The fascination and interest that these creatures caused was so great that it was only logical to dedicate a whole new field of study to them:

CRYPTOZOLOGY.

This book showcases some of the most well-known and intriguing creatures, explores their origin and documented sightings, along with detailed illustrations of how these monsters look like.

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