

Monster of the North

An expedition to the Arctic has uncovered a giant sea reptile.

Scientists have discovered the skeleton of a sea monster near the North Pole. Researchers from Oslo, Norway, recently announced that they have found a complete **plesiosaur**¹ skeleton. A plesiosaur is a prehistoric marine reptile about the size of a bus. The recent discovery is believed to be the first complete plesiosaur skeleton ever found.

A volunteer spotted the **fossils**² during an expedition to the Svalbard Islands, 300 miles off the coast of Norway, in August. Fossils are the remains of plants or animals from millions of years ago preserved in rock.

The meat-eating reptile lived more than 150 million years ago, during the Jurassic Period. Some scientists call it the *T. rex* of the sea. "We think it is [a 26-foot] skeleton from snout to tail," team leader, Jorn Hurum, told *WR News*. He described the plesiosaur's long teeth as being "the size of bananas."

The expedition also uncovered fossils from 27 other marine reptiles on the islands. "We hope to find lots more in the years to come," says Hurum. "We have just scratched the surface."



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- 1 **plesiosaur**: large reptile of the Mesozoic period that lived in the ocean; it had a flat body and paddles instead of limbs
 - 2 **fossils**: traces or imprints (such as footprints) or the remains (such as a skeleton or shell) of a plant or animal or other ancient organism that has been preserved in earth or rock