

Nature's Mysteries

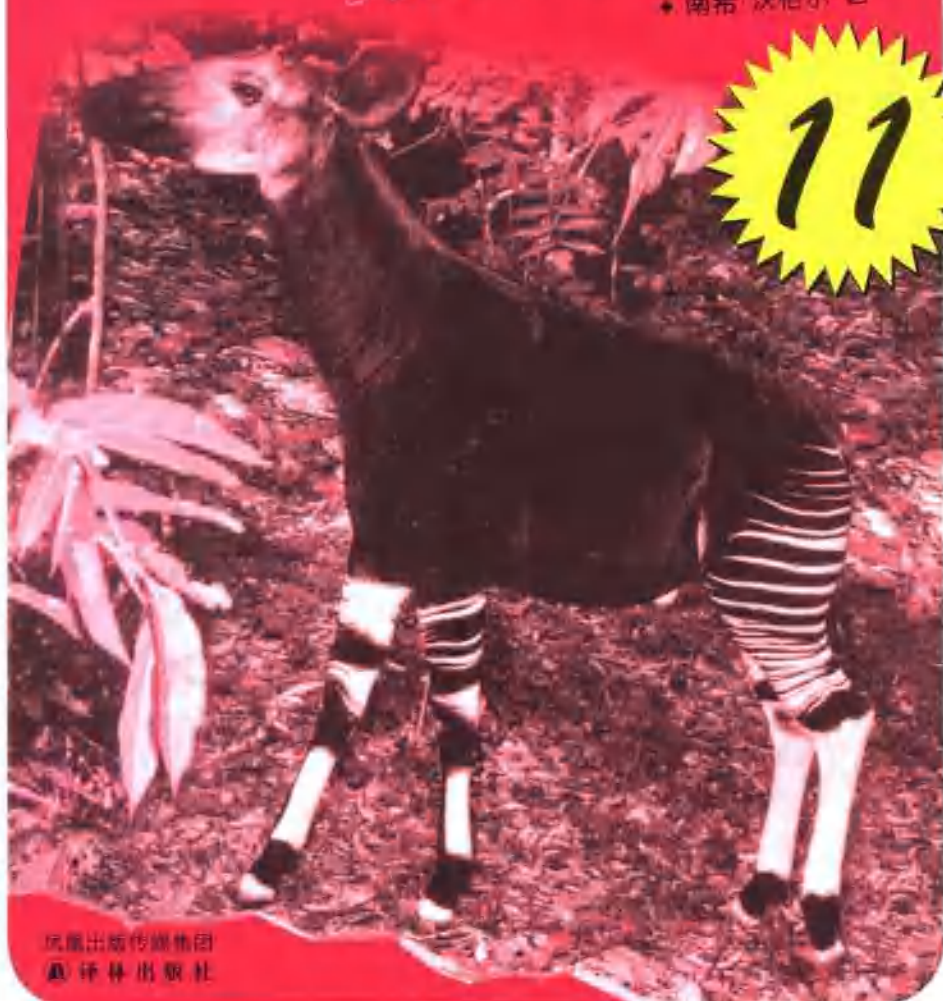
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自然的秘密

Nature's Mysteries

◆ 南希·沃格尔 著

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NATURE'S MYSTERIES



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**To children who like stories
of the strange and mysterious: May you find
wonder in the world.**

Chapter

1

Hidden Animals

Did you know that some people think a dinosaur lives in a lake in Scotland? Other people say they have seen a huge, humanlike animal in the mountains in California.

Ever since ancient times, people have been trying to solve the world's **mysteries**. They have climbed mountains, explored forests, and gone deep into the oceans. They have studied and tried to explain everything they've seen.



Biologists gather and study turtle eggs.

Although much has been explored and studied, there is still a lot to discover. Scientists have not yet studied every kind of animal and plant that lives on Earth. Believe it or not, scientists are discovering new kinds of plants and animals all the time.

There are many animals that scientists have heard about but haven't been able to find in order to study them. These are the hidden animals. If you are thinking that a hidden animal **sounds like** an animal that is playing hide and seek, you are almost right. When scientists talk about hidden animals, they are talking about animals that are unknown or hidden from science. These animals exist even if no one has actually seen them or proven their existence.

The scientists that look for and discover new animals are called *cryptozoologists*. This word combines three Greek words. They are *kryptos* (hidden), *zoo* (animal), and *logos* (discussion). So *cryptozoology* is the scientific discussion or study of hidden animals. This makes cryptozoologists scientists who study hidden animals.

The animals that cryptozoologists search for are called *cryptids*. A cryptozoologist's job is to gather evidence on cryptids and study it. After scientists gather evidence and identify a mysterious animal, it is not a cryptid anymore. Only hidden, mysterious, and unknown animals are cryptids.

Of course, the animals that cryptozoologists discover are not really new. They have been there all along. They simply were not widely known and not **classified** by science. No one has been able to **get close enough to** decide what kinds of animals they are.



Scientists excavate buried dinosaur bones.

Scientists classify, or organize, animals into groups, such as mammals and **reptiles**. Among the different classifications are smaller subgroups. These may be meat eaters and plant eaters, or creatures that crawl and creatures that fly. For example, a wolf is a mammal. It is also a meat eater.

Cryptozoologists have many ways to search for a hidden animal. Sometimes they follow stories. They listen to people describe an animal they claim to have seen. The animal may not match the descriptions of any known animal. If many people say they have seen the animal, scientists may decide to **investigate**. They will look for the animal themselves to see if it really exists.

If scientists are very lucky, they may have more than just eyewitness reports to go on. There may be physical evidence, too. Examples of physical evidence might be footprints, hair, skin, feathers, bones, or body parts of an animal that has died. It's easier for scientists to figure out the truth if they have more evidence to study.

In some cases, cryptozoologists have proved that an animal still exists that was long believed to be **extinct**, or gone from the earth. When this happens, the discovery is called a living fossil.

A fossil is any part of a plant or an animal that lived long ago that has hardened and is found in rocks. An animal fossil might be a bone or a tooth. It could be a footprint or an **outline** of a body that was pressed into mud that turned into rock over thousands of years. Of course, a living fossil isn't really a fossil at all. It's a living animal that matches fossil remains found by scientists.

outline

A shape

B sketch

C main idea



Fossil imprint of an ancient fish



A manatee

In other cases, cryptozoologists have found animals that no one had seen or heard of before. Sometimes creatures that were long thought to have been only stories, like the manatee, are found to be real. Some scientists believe that the manatee is behind reports of **mermaid** sightings. Viewed through water, this mammal can look like a human body with a finlike tail instead of legs. The real creature turned out to be more ordinary than the story's **version**. It was also an animal that was not correctly identified in the past.

Sometimes there is a simple explanation for what seems to be an extraordinary creature. Sometimes there isn't. This is what makes cryptozoology such an exciting science.

Cryptozoology became a real science in the 1950s through the work of a French scientist named Bernard Heuvelmans. When he was a boy, Heuvelmans liked to read about strange creatures. When he grew up, he studied real animals and became a zoologist.

As a scientist, Heuvelmans was still interested in strange and unusual animals. He wondered if the stories people told about mysterious animals might really be true. He decided to gather all the material he could.



Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans

Heuvelmans put together stories, investigations, and evidence people had collected. Then he compared the facts and reports with what he learned about known animals of the same type.



In just a few years, Heuvelmans had collected a lot of information about mysterious animals. He was able to write a book called *On the Track of Unknown Animals*.

Scientists respected the book because of the careful research that **went into** it. People who were not scientists enjoyed reading about these mysterious animals. The book became very popular around the world.

As he continued his research and writing, Heuvelmans decided that he needed a new word to describe what he was doing. So he invented the word *cryptozoology*.

Heuvelmans not only gathered information he had read, but also traveled to meet people who had seen mysterious animals. He also traveled all over the world to look at physical evidence that people had found. Then he wrote a second book about cryptids in the oceans. It is called *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents*.


For years some scientists made fun of cryptozoologists and their interest in hidden animals. These scientists did not believe there were any unknown animals. Again and again the cryptozoologists have proved those who doubted them to be wrong.



Hidden Fact



The International Society of Cryptozoology was founded in 1982 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Bernard Heuvelmans was elected president. The group defined cryptozoology as the study of "unexpected animals."



Chapter

2

The Kraken

One of the earliest cryptids to be proven real was a sea monster that was called the kraken (KRAH kun). Reports of this huge sea monster go back hundreds of years. They begin with an **account** of such an animal stranded on a beach in Iceland in 1639. Stories about an enormous sea creature with large and very long tentacles, or arms, were also told in Ireland and Norway. The kraken **turned out to be** a giant squid.



An engraving of the kraken and a three-masted ship in rough seas

In 1861 the crew of the French ship *Alecton* spotted what looked like a **gigantic** sea monster off the coast of Africa. The sailors tried to capture it, but the creature swam away. The *Alecton* sailed after it. After a long chase, the sailors finally got close enough to try again.

This time the crew tried to catch the creature with a harpoon. A harpoon is a kind of long spear

attached to a rope. It has a large, barbed hook at one end. The sailors managed to spear the creature. Then they tied a rope around its body and tried to haul it onto their ship. The rope slipped. The body of the sea monster fell back into the sea. Only a small part of the tail was saved.



An engraving of sailors on the *Alecton* harpooning a giant sea monster

The captain of the *Alecton* reported what had happened as soon as his ship reached land. The captain's official report was later presented at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences. The Academy made fun of the story. They said the creature could not possibly exist. No one believed that the sailors on board the *Alecton* were telling the truth.

A Danish zoologist named Johan Steenstrup had no better luck. He researched the same creature and published a description of it in 1857. He even collected pieces from fishermen who had captured the creatures. Even with the evidence, no one believed his stories of a giant squid.

Finally, in the 1870s, a number of creatures that matched the description of the kraken washed up on shores in Canada. Now there were actual remains of a whole creature to study. A group of scientists went to Canada to investigate.

In 1873 a fisherman and his son found a giant squid near Newfoundland. They **chopped off** a piece of one tentacle, which measured 25 feet. They said they had left 10 feet of the tentacle on the creature. They brought the piece of tentacle back on their boat and showed it to an investigator. He claimed the whole animal must have been about 60 feet long and 5 to 10 feet wide.