



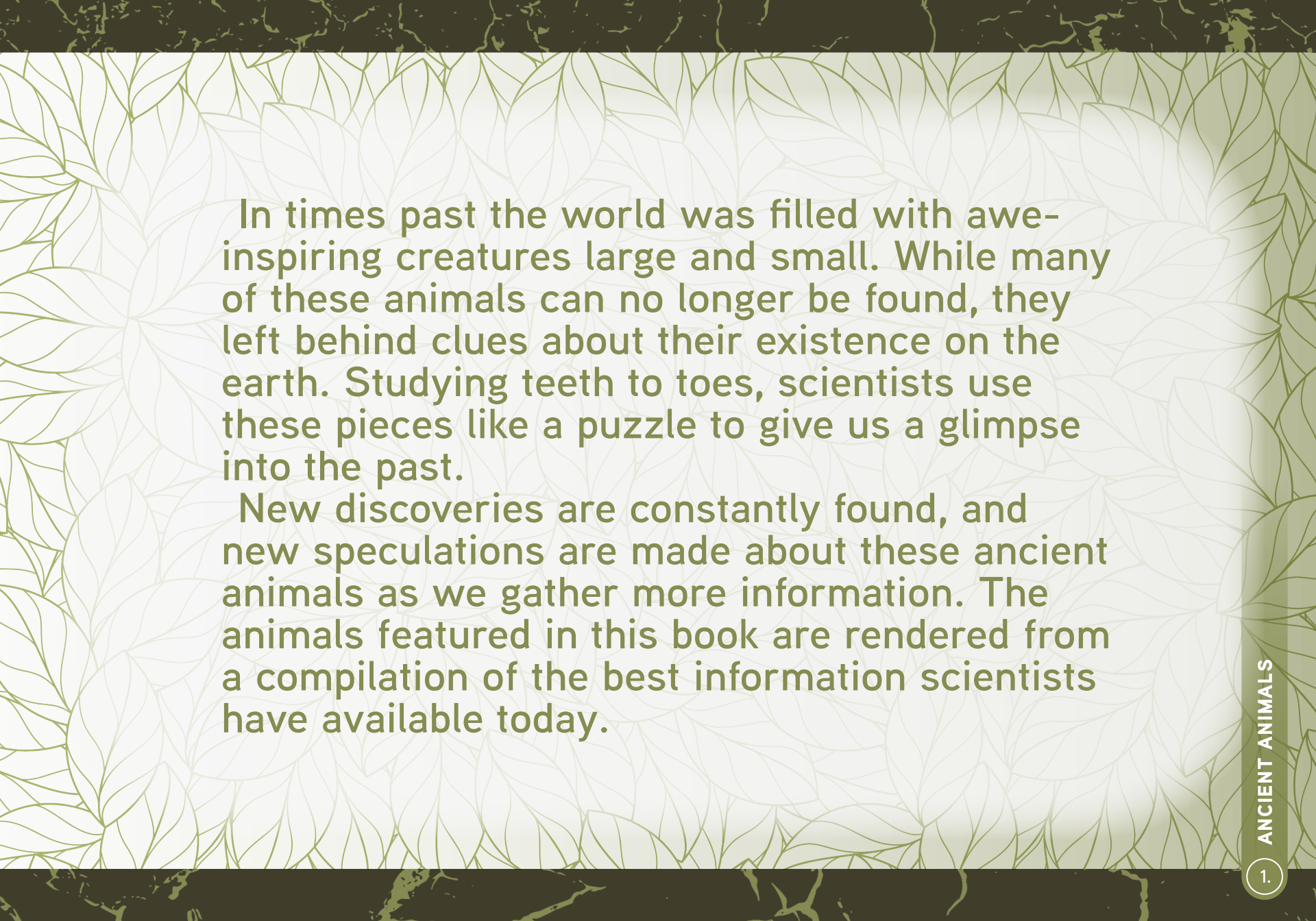
ANCIENT ANIMALS

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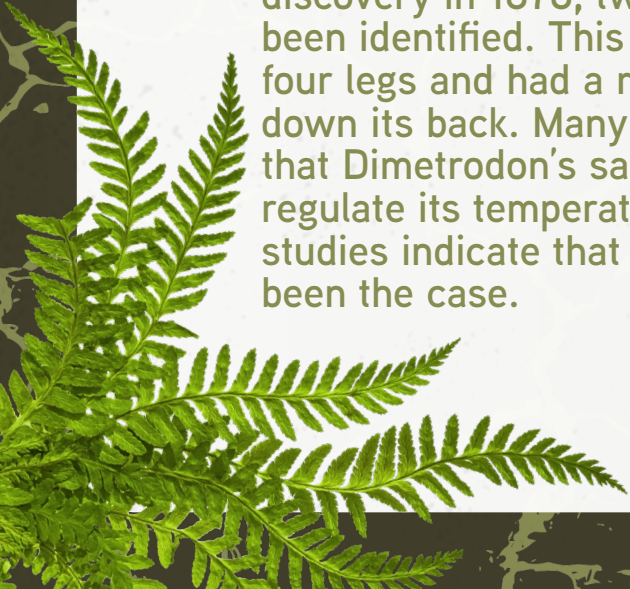


In times past the world was filled with awe-inspiring creatures large and small. While many of these animals can no longer be found, they left behind clues about their existence on the earth. Studying teeth to toes, scientists use these pieces like a puzzle to give us a glimpse into the past.

New discoveries are constantly found, and new speculations are made about these ancient animals as we gather more information. The animals featured in this book are rendered from a compilation of the best information scientists have available today.

DIMETRODON

Dimetrodon [die-MEH-truh-don], often mistaken for a dinosaur, was a mammal-like creature that fed on fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Since its initial discovery in 1878, twenty species have been identified. This animal walked on four legs and had a magnificent sail down its back. Many scientists believe that Dimetrodon's sail was used to help regulate its temperature, though other studies indicate that this may not have been the case.



FUN FACT:

Dimetrodon means “two measures of teeth.” It had long teeth in the front and shorter teeth in the back.



 **NORTH AMERICA**

INFO:

SIZE:

1.83–4.57 m (6–15 ft) long

WEIGHT:

27.22–249.48 kg (60–550 lb)

CARNIVORE

FOUND:

North America

INFO:

SIZE:

Up to 11.89 m (39 ft)

WEIGHT:

Up to 4,989.52 kg (11,000 lb)

CARNIVORE

FOUND:

Mexico and 10 states in the USA
(most abundant in Georgia)



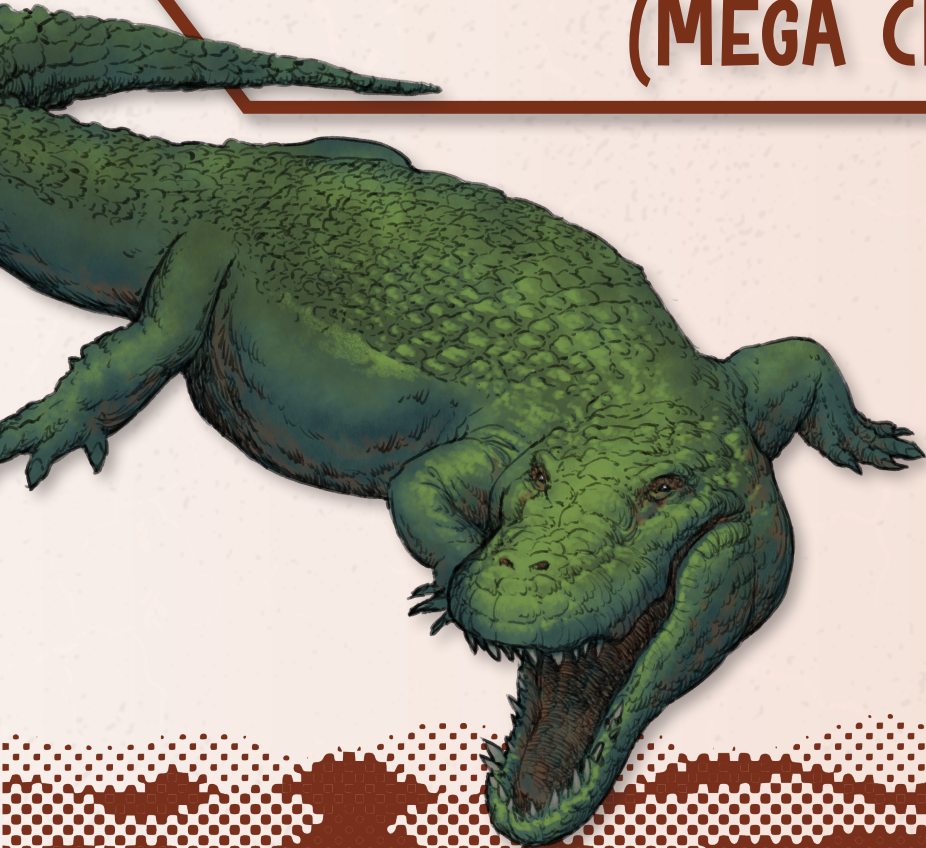
FUN FACT:

Deinosuchus possibly lived to be 50 years old. It was large enough to have preyed on dinosaurs.



DEINOSUCHUS

(MEGA CROCODILE)



A close relative of the alligator, Deinosuchus [die-nuh-SOO-kuss] was larger than most other predators in the subtropical seawater that used to cover the state of Ohio, USA. A cunning predator, Deinosuchus would wait at the shoreline of the sea, ambush its prey, and drag it into the water to submerge it before eating it.

ANOMALOCARIS

(GIANT SHRIMP)

In Greek, anomalocaris [uh-NOH-muh-lo-CARE-iss] means “unusual shrimp.” At a length of around 91.44 cm (3 ft) long, this ancient arthropod was certainly unusual. Anomalocaris was able to swim at great speeds due to its undulating motion, and it had sharp spikes on its limbs, useful for grabbing prey. With 32 overlapping plates in its mouth, Anomalocaris may have been able to crush the thick armor on food like trilobites, but it has also been theorized that it was a filter feeder, using its spiky arms to sift through gravel for smaller prey.



FUN FACT:

Anomalocaris's large stalked eyes had 16,000 lenses each, which gave it 360-degree eyesight.



INFO:

SIZE:

Up to 91.44 cm (3 ft)

WEIGHT:

9.07 kg (20 lb)

CARNIVORE

FOUND:

Utah, USA; Canada; China; Australia; and Greenland



MEGALANIA

(VARANUS PRISCUS)

Categorized in the monitor family of lizards along with today's Komodo dragon, fossils from the gigantic Megalania [meg-uh-LAY-nee-uh] lizard have been found all over Australia.

At about 5 m (16.4 ft) long and with sharp, curved teeth, Megalania would have

been able to take down large prey

such as pygmy elephants (now extinct), kangaroos, and tortoises. It is believed that Megalania also carried venom in its bite.



FUN FACT:

Megalania is the largest-known land lizard. The Komodo dragon is one of its closest relatives.



AUSTRALIA

INFO:

SIZE:

3.5–7 m (11.5–23 ft)

WEIGHT:

Up to 1,940.02 kg (4,277 lb)

CARNIVORE

FOUND:

Australia

ANDREWSARCHUS

By studying the skull of the Andrewsarchus [an-droo-SAR-kuss], scientists have theorized that this animal was either a hunter or a scavenger. It appears to have had characteristics such as a very strong jaw and wide cheekbones. Not much else is known about Andrewsarchus, but perhaps one day more fossils from this meat-eating creature will be found.



FUN FACT:

The only fossil of this species ever uncovered is a skull found in Mongolia that measured 0.8 m (2.6 ft) long. From this specimen, scientists have only been able to make educated guesses about what the rest of the body may have looked like.



INFO:

SIZE:

About 1.77 m (5.8 ft) tall
at the shoulder

3.35 m (11 ft) long

WEIGHT:

Maybe 907.18–1,814.37 kg
(2,000–4,000 lb)

CARNIVORE OR OMNIVORE

FOUND:

Mongolia





PALAEUDYPTES

(GIANT PENGUINS)

Including four species of large ancient penguins, fossils of the Palaeudyptes [PAH-lay-you-DIP-teez] genus of birds have been found on Seymour Island, Antarctica, and in New Zealand. At about 2 m (6.7 ft) tall, the largest of the four species was taller than most humans while the smallest was closer to the size of modern emperor penguins. Based on their size, scientists think these “colossus penguins” were able to stay underwater for around 40 minutes at a time.

FUN FACT:

A similar penguin today is the emperor penguin at 1.22 m (4 ft) tall and close to 45 kg (100 lb).



INFO:

SIZE:

1.83 m (6 ft) tall

WEIGHT:

About 113.4 kg (250 lb)

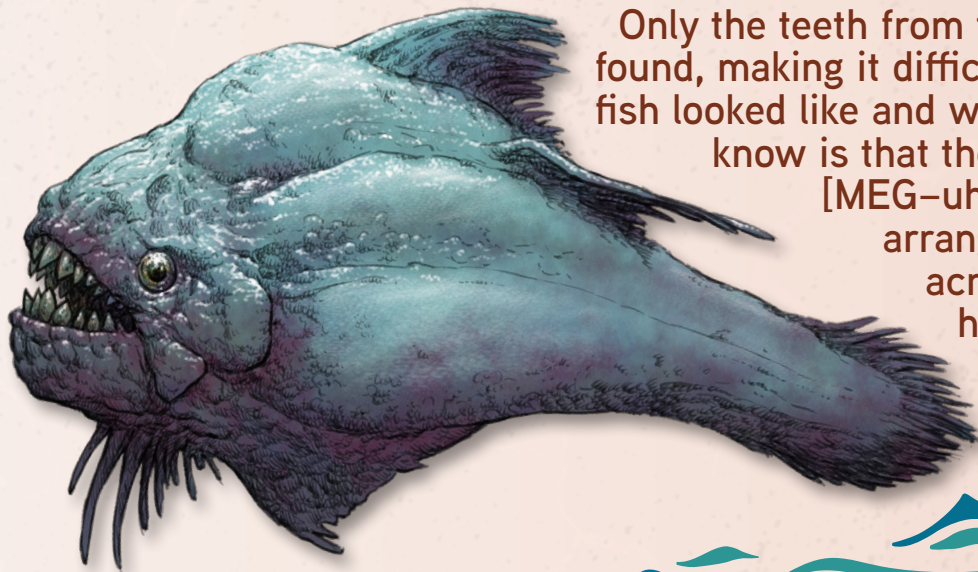
CARNIVORE

FOUND:

Antarctica and
New Zealand



MEGAPIRANHA



Only the teeth from this ancient fish have been found, making it difficult to decipher what this fish looked like and what it ate. What scientists do know is that the teeth of the Megapiranha [MEG-uh-per-ah-nuh] were arranged in a zigzag pattern across the front jaw and could have been useful for either a carnivorous or herbivorous fish species.





HIERAAETUS MOOREI

(HAAST'S EAGLE)

This magnificent creature is the largest eagle ever known to exist, with the females being much larger than the males. The *Hieraaetus moorei* [hi-yer-ATE-us MORE-ay] lived on the islands of New Zealand, where their sharp talons and curved beaks enabled them to feast on flightless birds and eggs. Scientists speculate that their muscular legs and wing muscles allowed them to take off in flight from the ground.

STUPENDEMYYS



Stupendemys [stoo-PEN-duh-muss], the largest freshwater turtle known to have existed, ate plants, animals, and nearly anything that would fit in its mouth. This side-necked turtle would fold its long neck into one side of its shell for protection, and its heavy weight allowed it to stay underwater for extended periods of time.

Scientists discovered that the male Stupendemys had horns on the upper part of its shell, which is called the carapace. These horns are speculated to have been used for defense.



ANCIENT ANIMALS

Have you ever thought about the extraordinary animals that lived long ago? Paleontologists and other scientists have made many fascinating discoveries about these incredible, often spine-chilling ancient creatures.

Join us for a ton of fun as we learn about them one by one!



ORIGINAL PUBLICATION



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