

## WHEN MONSTERS RULED THE DEEP

More fearsome than anything Hollywood could ever dream up, huge reptiles prowled ancient seas- and still prey our imagination.

There is nothing so frightening as the idea of a sea monster. Unlike T-rex and other giant dinosaurs, which we went extinct, might sea monsters live on? Might they lurk in the sea and occasionally come into view? Through the ages, serious mariners have returned to port with accounts of huge sanky beasts. Stories about sea monsters have slithered into many cultures. Three legends, from Scotland, North America and China will be represented in my presentation.

But what about the science of sea monsters? In fact, there was a time, when they did exist. About 259 million years ago Earth's continents were gathered into one landmass, Pangea. Shallow seas and the lack of significant marine predators created new niches for many reptiles that had developed on land. They wriggled into the water, swam, reproduced, and died, becoming the fossils we admire today. They remain., with good reason, the stuff of nightmares.

Lake Loch Ness, Scotland has become a popular tourist's resort ever since 90-year old Christian Spurling made "a photo of this mysterious creature" in 1934. Even though he admitted later, that this photo was fake, he joined a fake neck and head to a toy submarine, Nessie has become a great star. Every summer Loch Ness is packed with tourists and all hope, they will be able to see Nessie. Every time a huge wave appears, they claim Nessie is responsible for this. Scientists say believing in Nessie is close to believing in Santa Claus, but its fans still hope they will be able to see Nessie, a queen of Loch Ness. They even have their official website:  
[www.haveyouseeniyet.com](http://www.haveyouseeniyet.com).

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