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CRYPTOZOOLOGY

In search of West Coast 'Caddy' monster

TODD DAYAK
EDMONTON JOURNAL

Everyone loves a monster. Generally, if the monster doesn't come from the great black expanse of the universe it comes from that other deep, dark place.

The ocean.

"It's a wonderful mystery, and that's why we're getting so much interest from around the world," says John Kirk, ex-fish monstrologist and president of the British Columbia Cryptozoology Club. He now lives on the West Coast, close to Caddy.

Enter "Caddyosaurus" into your favourite search engine on the Web, and you'll find a couple of dozen Internet home pages on the subject, from serious investigations to...

The interest is at a new peak, it's the hottest it's been since Caddy first entered popular culture in 1933.

A headline in the Victoria Daily Times on Oct. 5, 1933, is an early hint of what was to come: "Enthusiastic Tale of Huge Sea Serpent Off Victoria. Journalist and editor Archie Wills named the creature Caddyosaurus as many initial sightings occurred near Cadboro Bay.

Kirk attributes the new interest and Web craze to the work of his five-person group and its project Caddyscan. The site can be accessed from the cryptozoology club's home page at www.bcss.org.

The team has set up motion-detecting digital cameras in hot West Coast locations. On the site you'll find a history of sightings and descriptions of the Caddyosaurus. One of the latest sightings was taken in late 1997 at Nanaimo Harbour, B.C. Due to a series of accidents and inopportunities common to most mysteries, the remains of that particular carcass were lost before they could be examined. According to eyewitnesses, the fellas who found the specimen in 1937 described it as "a creature of reptilian appearance, 10-feet-6 in length, with a head that bears close resemblance to that of a horse, a long tail and the trained down nose of a camel."

Unlike some monsters, there are no reports of Caddyosaurus attacks or victims. Caddyosaurus muskegs. The worst report is of a 1937 sea serpent startling a woman and her dog.

"I get e-mails every week from television companies around the world," says Kirk, "and they're all eager to do documentaries. We've had interest from Europe, Asia, South America, you name it."

University of Alberta biologist Cindy Paulakowski had never heard of Caddyosaurus, specifically, prior to my call.

"It's always a funny topic, open-to-clear thing, isn't it? So one is even interested in it," she says. "It's fun."

"This idea has been around a long time," she says. "There's always a little piece of evidence, a fragment, a track, a funny photo, a hoax to keep people involved. Occasionally you get people who really believe it."

Kirk thinks the interest runs deep, going back centuries. "Caddyosaurus taps into one of the quintessential legends of the world. Whether it's the Greeks or the Vikings — they all mentioned sea serpents and dragons. Caddyosaurus isn't a dragon, though."

Of course, there are skeptics, and Kirk says he understands why. Science still always has no fable for them. "Scientists say there are no major discoveries to be made. This is ridiculous. There are always more mysteries out there."

Kirk says he doesn't expect to soon see the serpents, Kirk says, adding that he's looking for their help. "For anyone who captures a Caddyosaurus, we offer a 500 reward."

Some of the Caddy sites link the creature to Sasquatch and aliens, even ghosts.

"We're scientists," says Kirk, with gusto. "UFOs are scientific, but not ghosts or any of that other New Agey stuff. There are Sasquatches, the Ogopogo and I also think Sasquatches, the Ogopogo and I also think Caddyosaurus are paranormal beings who live in other dimensions."

These people upset Kirk and his team. "They give Cryptozoology a bad name," he says.

Caddyosaurus is described as a creature of reptilian appearance. This map shows locations of sightings off the coasts of B.C., Alaska and Washington.

Caddy

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