



Sea Dragons: Predators of the Prehistoric Oceans

Richard Ellis

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In the days when dinosaurs dominated the earth, their marine counterparts every bit as big and ferocious reigned supreme in prehistoric seas. In this entrancing book, Richard Ellis, one of the world's foremost writers on the denizens of the deep, takes us back to the Mesozoic era to resurrect the fascinating lives of these giant seagoing reptiles.

Working from the fossil record, Ellis explores the natural history of these fierce predators, speculates on their habits, and tells how they eventually became extinct or did they? He traces the 200-million-year history of the great ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, and mosasaurs who swam the ancient oceans and who, according to some, may even still frequent the likes of Loch Ness.

Picture if you will seventy-foot dragons with foot-long serrated teeth, or an animal that looked like a crocodile crossed with a shark the size of a small yacht. With its impossibly long neck, Plesiosaurus conybeari has been compared to "a giant snake threaded through the body of a turtle." At a length of nearly sixty feet, Mosasaurus hoffmanni boasted powerful jaws and teeth that could crunch up even the hardest-shelled giant sea turtle. And Kronosaurus queenslandicus, perhaps the most formidable of the lot, had a skull nine feet long more than twice that of Tyrannosaurus Rex with teeth to match.

The first book about these amazing animals in nearly a century, *Sea Dragons* draws upon the most recent scientific research to vividly reconstruct their lives and habitats. Their fossils have been found all over the world in Europe, Australia, Japan, and even Kansas in lands that once lay on the floors of Jurassic and Triassic seas. Along the way, the book also provides intriguing insights into and entertaining tales about the work, discoveries, and competing theories that compose the fascinating world of vertebrate paleontology.

Ellis also graces his text with a set of incomparable illustrations. Widely hailed as our foremost artist of marine natural history, he depicts vividly how these creatures probably appeared and, through these likenesses, invites us to speculate on their locomotion, their predatory habits, their very lifestyles.

A genuine book of marvels and wonders, *Sea Dragons* will certainly stir one's curiosity about our planet's prehistoric past.

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