

## Book review

### **CADBOROSAURUS: Survivor from the Deep.**

Paul H. LeBOND and Edward L. BOUSFIELD, 1995.

Horsdal & Schubart, Victoria, BC Canada.

ISBN 0-920663-33-8.

In this little book, two Canadian scientists review the evidence for a large unidentified marine animal seen off the west coast of North America. The animal is called Cadborosaurus, or Caddy for sort, after Cadboro Bay, near Victoria, BC, where it has often been seen. Because this animal is known only through eye-witness reports or inadequate material and documentary evidence, it remains a "cryptid", i.e. an undiscovered creature which is of interest to cryptozoologists. This monster has attracted the attention of scientists since its feature was introduced on the cover of "Science" in 1979 (vol. 205, no. 4402) with its description as "The Sea Hag", an 1800-pound monster sighted in the Gulf of Georgia, British Columbia. Sightings of sea and lake monsters have been reported from ancient times to the present and have been the subject of some serious research. "More famous, but not necessarily more real, cryptids include the Loch Ness monster of Scotland! and the ape-like Sasquatch of western North America.

The authors begin by showing evidence from native artifacts, such as petroglyphs, which depict a serpentine creature with small flippers, big head and teeth, reminiscent of later eye-witness reports. Much of the evidence for Caddy comes from descriptions by surprised sailors, fishermen and beach combers, who often were very hesitant about reporting such an unknown animal, for fear of ridicule. Of the hundreds of reports over the last century, the authors have selected 150 which satisfy their criteria that: 1- the object seen must clearly be an animal (not a branch or a wave); 2-it must clearly be an unfamiliar animal (not a seal, turtle, sea-lion or other well known marine animal). Any report where doubt arose was discarded. What remains is an impressive

collection of detailed observations of an animal characterized by a long neck, a horse-like head (sometimes described as camel, or giraffe-like), a sinuous, sometimes coiled body reaching 10m in length. Sometimes a mane or coarse hair are mentioned. Large eyes and a big mouth, with prominent teeth are reported. The animals swims quite rapidly, surfaces only briefly, and is sometimes seen in pairs.

What would satisfy a biologist would of course be a specimen, dead or alive. The authors review strandings of strange carcasses on the coast of the northeast Pacific. Most of them turn out to have been basking sharks. One carcass however stand out on its own. It was found in the stomach of a sperm whale at Naden Harbour, a whaling station in the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1937. The creature was so unusual that all work stopped and the long (a little over 3m) slender body was laid out on boxes and photographed. Its camel-like head and sinuous appearance suggested at the time that it might be a juvenile Caddy. The authors found a living witness of the event who authenticated the photographs. Unfortunately, the carcass was not preserved. There is also a more recent report by a local mariner of an animal interpreted as a baby caddy.

The authors attempt to classify the animal on the basis of its observed qualities, tentatively describing it as a reptile: Cadborosaurus willsi, in honor of Archie Wills, a newspaper editor on the 1930's who took a strong interest in Caddy.

Not everyone will be convinced that Caddy exists, or that it is a reptile. Nevertheless, everyone who is curious about strange marine animals will appreciate the information presented by LeBlond and Bousfield, who, in the end, invite the reader to draw their own conclusion on

the strength of the evidence presented.

Both authors are distinguished scientists, members of the Royal Society of Canada, and experts in their respective fields of physical oceanography or zoology. Professor Paul H. LeBlond is director of the Program in Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Dr. Edward L. Bousfield is a retired Chief Zoologist of the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa.

In the past, 30 and more years ago, oceanographers used to engage in scientific investiga-

tions in an atmosphere of romance and adventure. However, at present, in the space age, they tend to look upon the oceans as if it was just water for experiments in glass flasks or beakers. This is a sad situation for orthodox oceanographers, and this welcome little book restores some of the romantic emotion of discovery which is such an important motivation for marine science.

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