

Kids' Animal Station

For kids who love animals by a kid who loves animals

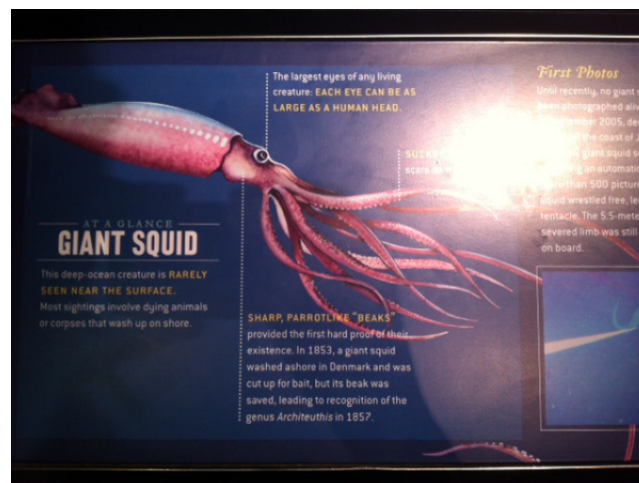
7 Animals Mistaken As Mythical Creatures

Back when someone could say an animal skull was a certain type of animal and people just believed it, people used to get a lot wrong. Back in times like that, there was no science or facts to back up claims. Here are 7 animals that humans mistook as mythical creatures.

1. I'm sure most of you have heard of giant squids pulling boats under the water, whether it was from a book, or a movie. The same thing happens every time: huge tentacles reach out of the ocean and grab the boat, starting to pull it under. This instance of confusing myths with animals is probably the most on point. The Kraken was basically a colossal squid that pulled ships under. This story was told mostly by sailors at sea (obviously). The 'Kraken' was actually a Giant Squid. While these squids don't pull boats under water and don't snap sailors in half with their parrot beaks like told in their stories, but they did get one thing right: the Giant Squids were indeed giants. A Giant Squid's eyes can be as big as a human's head. Giant Squids do indeed have 8 tentacles and 2 arms with suckers attached, but they use their tentacles for catching fish and fighting off sperm whales, not dragging ships under the water. Giant Squids are actually much more harmless than people might think.



The kraken was really a



2. People even today tell tales of mermaids and ladies seducing sailors and sending them to their rocky demise. Guess what these fair haired sea women actually were? Manatees. This makes me laugh so hard. How could someone see this ...



When they we really seeing this ...

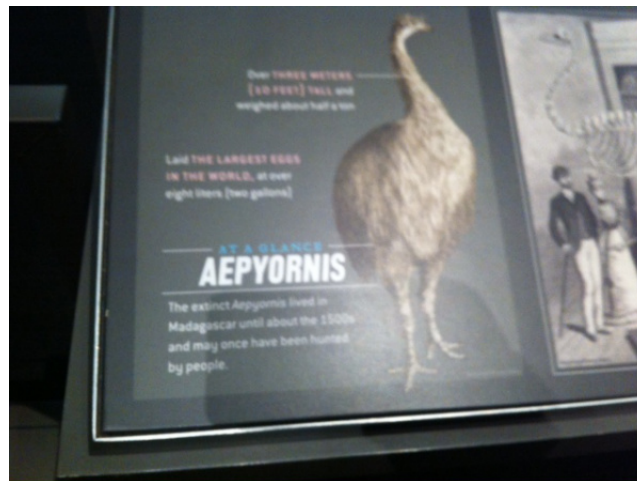


I mean, it sorta makes sense, considering manatees like to sit on rocks in the ocean and most sightings did happen in fog, but manatees are missing some pretty key features of humans. No arms, no hair, no vocal cords. (Strangely enough, manatees do make sound despite having no vocal cords; no one knows why). People thinking manatees are sea women instead of sea cows might have something to do with the recent endangerment (and extinction) of some types of manatees. By the way, I sure you already know by now, but if you have injured or killed something called a “sea cow,” you are officially a bad human being. Just saying. Anyway, I found it highly weird that the cause of mermaid sightings is something as unflattering as a manatee.

3. Ever heard of a mythical creature called a Roc? (Try not to sound stupid while you're saying that at the Denver Science and Nature Museum, "Look Mom! A Roc! ") Rocs were, apparently huge. So huge that they ate elephants for dinner. I think you may be seeing a pattern here. Most mythical creatures are huge or altered versions of normal things. Like, Kraken = Huge Squid, Roc= Huge bird. Well, anyway, they were so big that in the book *Arabian Nights*, it says that the main character, Sinbad, found a white sphere like dome with seemingly no entrance on an island. As it turned out, the sphere was an egg and the entire ISLAND was the Roc's nest. The actual bird, Aepyornis, has no wings, is only ten feet tall, and weighed half a ton. (Talk about blowing things out of proportions!) Though it was pretty huge for a bird. Its eggs can be up to 2 gallons. Aepyornis looks a lot like an Ostrich. Sadly, Aepyornis is extinct, which is sort of obvious, considering I would ride one to school every day.



A roc was really a ...



4. If any of you out there have read *The Odyssey*, which by the way, was pretty sweet, you know about the epic scene with Odysseus tricking the evil cyclops Polyphemus and escaping with his head still intact. Well, people used to mistake the Dwarf Elephant Skull for a Cyclops skull. (Insert pictures) Well, it does make some sense why people thought this, as the elephant's trunk hole looks similar to a cyclopses eye hole. But, that still does not explain the four legged, clearly not humanoid body that

was probably laying nearby. Out of all of the mixups I have encountered so far, this one has to be the most ridiculous. An elephant being a cyclops?! I'm starting to think people are so desperate to find mythical creatures that they lose all rationality.



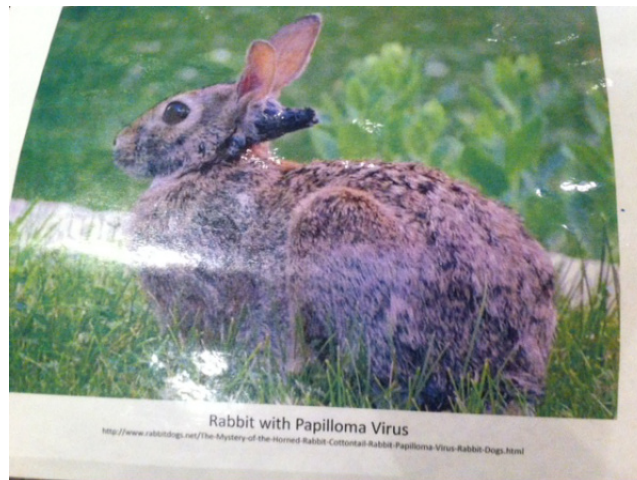
People thought this skull was from a cyclops. NOPE!

5. Introducing Colorado's only famous mythical creature! A Jackalope! It's like a rabbit, but with antlers! Wow! Amaaaaazing! Well, it's not actually the only mythical creature said to be in Colorado. There is also the fish with fur. Wow. Something tells me that Colorado isn't a mythical creature sighting spot. The Jackalope does just what you expect it to do. It doesn't do jack. I mean, the Jackalope isn't even a propaganda to get parents to buy their children free stuff and rocket sales, therefore benefiting the economy *cough* Santa *cough*. As it turns out, even though I have no idea why you would even benefit from knowing that Jackalopes exist, there is sort of a Jackalope.

Jackalopes literally are rabbits with the Papilloma virus, which is just a virus that gives rabbits tumors that look like antlers. I bet people thought, “ Gee, that there rabbit has cancer. Huh, it looks like antlers. I’d better make a story about it being a rabbit-antelope hybrid!”



Colorado's famed jackalope is really ...



A rabbit with a virus!

6. In AD 1250 at the town hall of Klagenfurt, Austria, there was a skull on display that was said to be the skull of a dragon slain before the town was built. Of course, this turned out to be untrue. Though, what did you expect around 750 years ago? I am personally impressed they even had a town hall back then! The “dragon skull” was actually the skull of a Woolly Rhinoceros. Though I don’t know why it was so hard to figure out. The skull clearly had the flat teeth of a herbivore, and dragons are most popularly thought of as bloodthirsty carnivores. Not like they knew that herbivores have flat teeth and carnivores have sharp teeth back then though. I know a couple people who get really annoyed when someone says a mythical creature is real. When people ask me why mythical

creatures, something that may not even exist, are so popular, this is probably the answer. People have been thinking about things like dragons, unicorns, and Bigfoot for forever! Mythical creatures have been ingrained in society for so long, it's bound to be a very popular subject.



People often claimed to find dragon skulls ...



Like this one — but it's not from a dragon!

7. People used to (and still do) think that griffins exist. Since griffins are half horse, lion, and eagle, I can't deny how cool griffins look. Even though I highly doubt griffins exist. If they did, they would've either killed or enslaved all of the human race. Griffins have no reason to be in hiding. Think about it. If you were the size of a bear, thought and had the skills of a horse, a lion, and an eagle, and thought humans looked tasty, why would you ever hide from them? I've never heard any official records of people being swooped up by griffins, and, now that photoshop exists, it is harder than ever to prove griffins walk the earth. Some explorers found what they thought was a griffin skull. (I think they may be the only explorers ever that found a mythical creature and actually looked at the rest of its body, too.) It had birdlike claws and a sharp beak. It turned out to be a dinosaur, which I personally think is just as valuable. A Protoceratops was its name. It had a beak and a crest on its head. It also had jagged teeth. Man, just making this blog post is making me question the legitimacy of mythical creatures.



Folks are still trying to prove griffins exist!



But they best they've come up with is a dino skull!

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