

NEWS

Florida Fossil Hunters



Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc.
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From Ye Olde President.....

Hi to all FFH members and hope all is well. WOW another year is about to end and the holiday's are around the corner.

The FFH Fossil Fair was a great success. Show attendance was good with 827 adults and 239 kids. Dealers were happy and I want to thank all FFH members that volunteer at the show. Special thanks to Valerie First and all volunteers for their hard work to make the show a success. *All volunteers please see Dave at the meeting to collect your fossil bucks earned.*

Paleontology for Kids programs is active at all meetings from 2pm to 3pm before the main meeting.

Our next meeting is at the OSC on Saturday, November 15th at 3pm in the Founders Room 3rd Floor. *Guest speaker will be Alex Brunning on the topic Dino Diggers "A New Beginning"*. Elections for FFH 2026 Officers will be held at the November meeting. All positions are available to all members interested in becoming an FFH Officer.

There will be no FFH meeting for December at the Orlando Science Center. **FFH Annual Christmas Party and Fossil Bucks Auction** will be held at Dave & Melissa's Dunaway's house on December 6th at 4pm. Bring your hard earned fossil bucks and some yummys to share (sandwiches, cookies, cupcakes, etc.) Dave Dunaway & Ed Metrin will be bringing in a sack full of goodies to bid on (page 6).

Thank you
Salvatore Sansone,
FFH President

FOSSIL SWAP
at each Meeting!

Support your club, buy fossil t-shirts.
Different shirts will be available for
adults and kids at each meeting.
Cost of shirts for kids are \$20
and adults are \$25.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday, November 15th

2pm Paleontology for Kids

3pm Meeting

FFH meeting at OSC

COMING EVENTS

FFH Annual Christmas Party
and Fossil Bucks Auction

will be held at
the Dunaway's home on
Saturday, December 6th at 4pm.
See pg 2 for the address

Coming Soon!
the 2026 Calendar of Events
Watch the Website

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www.floridafossilhunters.com

MEETINGS & MORE

At EVERY meeting!

- Support your club with the purchase of vintage fossil fair t-shirts! Variety of sizes available at meetings while they last. \$25/Adults and Kids/\$20.
- "Fossil swap": every member brings in fossils to talk about and swap.
- Paleontology for Kids has been a success and will be held before the general meetings at 2:00pm.

Regular Meetings are held at the Orlando Science Center. Unless otherwise noted.

Admission and parking is FREE to members. At the garage & ticket counter inform them you are there for the meeting.

PALEONTOLOGY FOR KIDS

Every OSC Meeting; 2:00-3:00pm

Kids' Fossil Blast is an informal, hands-on experience aimed at kids ages 5 to 14.

MEMBER REGISTRATION

<https://floridafossilhunters.com/membership>,

mail in the form on pg 7 or renew at the meeting.

Our Upcoming Meetings

NOVEMBER MEETING

Saturday, November 15th at 4pm. Guest speaker will be *Alex Brunning on the topic Dino Diggers "A New Beginning"*.

ELECTIONS

Elections for FFH 2026 Officers will also be held at the November meeting. All positions are available to all members interested in becoming an FFH Officer. All 2025 FFH members are eligible.

Check out the officer list on page 7 for more info. Would you like more information? Email us at info@floridafossilhunters.com

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY AND FOSSIL BUCKS AUCTION

The party will be held at Dave and Melissa Dunaway's house on Saturday, December 6th at 4pm. Bring your hard earned fossil bucks and yummys to share (sandwiches, cookies, cupcakes, etc.) Dave Dunaway & Ed Metrin will be bringing in a sack full of goodies to bid on.

Address: Dave Dunaway Resident 600 Fern Drive, Longwood Florida 32779.

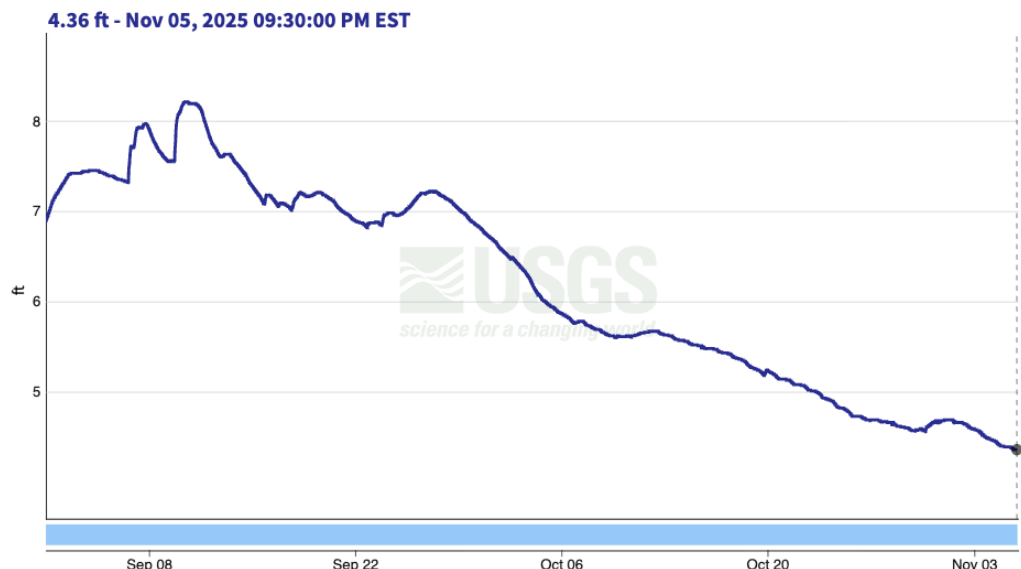
PIECE ON THE PEACE

Want the most current height? Visit floridafossilhunters.com and click on the easy Peace River Gauge button in the sidebar or under the Resources tab for the latest water level data or visit the USGS website directly.
PEACE RIVER AT US 17 AT ZOLFO SPRINGS, FL

Peace River at US 17 at Zolfo Springs, FL - USGS-02295637

[Subscribe to WaterAlert](#)

- using custom time span -
September 1, 2025 - November 5, 2025
Gage height, feet



UChicago paleontologists unveil duck-billed dinosaur 'mummies'

Oct 24, 2025 | By Grace Niewijk

66 million-year-old fossils preserved in muddy badlands of Wyoming featured scales, spikes and hooves

*A mummy of the juvenile duck-billed dinosaur *Edmontosaurus annectens* was preserved as a dried carcass some 66 million years ago in the badlands of Wyoming. Large areas of scaly, wrinkled skin and a tall, fleshy crest over its back were preserved in a thin layer of clay over its fossilized skeleton. Photo courtesy of Tyler Keillor/Fossil Lab*

In a new paper in *Science*, experts from the University of Chicago describe steps that took place some 66 million years ago to transform carcasses of a duck-billed dinosaur, *Edmontosaurus annectens*, into dinosaur "mummies" preserving fine details of scales and hooves.

Called clay templating, the external fleshy surface of the dinosaur was preserved over the skeleton after burial by a thin clay mask no more than 1/100th of an inch thick. Using an array of imaging techniques, the scientists reconstructed the fleshy appearance of the animal in life, from a tall crest over the neck and trunk to a spike row over its tail and hooves sheathing its toes. Combined with fossilized footprints, the appearance of a duck-billed dinosaur—long guessed at but never demonstrated in this detail—is now at hand.

"It's the first time we've had a complete, fleshed-out view of a large dinosaur that we can really feel confident about," said senior author Paul Sereno, professor of organismal biology and anatomy at



UChicago. "The badlands in Wyoming where the finds were made is a unique 'mummy zone' that has more surprises in store from fossils collected over years of visits by teams of University undergrads."

Using historical photos and field sleuthing, Sereno and his team relocated the sites in east-central Wyoming where several famous dinosaur mummies were discovered in the early 20th century, mapping out a compact "mummy zone." In those stacked river sands, they excavated two new *Edmontosaurus* mummies—a late juvenile and an early adult—with large continuous areas of preserved external skin surface.

"This is a mask, a template, a clay layer so thin you could blow it away," Sereno said. "It was attracted to the outside of the carcass in a fluke event of preservation."

[Read the full article here to learn more about this find and the research on the duck-billed dinosaur *Edmontosaurus annectens*.](#)

The team used several imaging tools, including hospital and micro-CT scans, thin sections, X-ray spectroscopy, clay analyses and examination of the discovery site—all of which pointed to how this unique preservation occurred.

Beyond the anatomical revelations, the study offers a toolkit for future research on dinosaur soft anatomy: new preparation methods, a clear lexicon for soft structures and scales, an imaging workflow from fossil to a flesh model and a recipe for

generating a dinosaur mummy. More than stand-alone discoveries, the team's mummy research offers a new model for dinosaur mummification involving clay templating to test on future finds.

The authors also point to what comes next: targeted searches for similarly preserved specimens in the same Wyoming strata and elsewhere; biomechanical models that now have reliable external boundaries; and companion analyses that probe when and where clay templating takes hold.

"This may be the single best paper I've released," Sereno said. "From field to lab to 3D reconstructions along with a suite of useful terms defined, it's a tour de force, and it tells a coherent story about how these remarkable fossils come to be and what we can learn from them."

Full article and see more pictures:

<https://news.uchicago.edu/story/uchicago-paleontologists-unveil-duck-billed-dinosaur-mummies>



The skull of the "sword dragon" has a huge eye socket and a mark on its head that suggests it may have been attacked by another larger ichthyosaur

Fossil found on Dorset coast is unique 'sword dragon' species

9 October 2025 | Jonah Fisher, Environment correspondent

A near-complete skeleton found on Dorset's Jurassic coast has been identified as a new species of ichthyosaur, a type of prehistoric marine reptile that once ruled the oceans.

The dolphin-sized ichthyosaur has been named *Xiphodracon goldencapensis*, or the "sword dragon of Dorset" and is the only known example of its name," said ichthyosaur expert Dr Dean Lomax, kind. Scientists say that marks on its skull suggest that the "sword dragon" may have been killed by a bite to the head, possibly inflicted by a much larger species of ichthyosaur.

First discovered by a prolific fossil hunter at Golden Cap in Dorset in 2001 the new ichthyosaur was then acquired by a museum in Canada. It has only recently been fully analysed by experts and a paper published identifying it as a new species of ichthyosaur. "I thought long and hard about the name," said ichthyosaur expert Dr Dean Lomax, who co-authored the paper identifying the skeleton as a new species.

"Xiphodracon translates to sword-like dragon and that is in reference to that very long, sword-like snout, but also the fact that ichthyosaurs have been

referred to as sea dragons for about 200 years." They are classified as marine reptiles, not dinosaurs, and spent their lives in the water. This particular ichthyosaur is thought to have swum the seas about 185 million years ago, a period from which very few ichthyosaur fossils have been found. "During this time ichthyosaurs are incredibly rare, and Xiphodracon is the most complete individual ever found from there, helping to fill a gap," Dr Lomax said. "It's a missing piece of the puzzle in the ichthyosaur evolution."

The "sword dragon" is thought to have been about 3m long and has several features that have not been seen in other species of ichthyosaur. Scientists say the strangest detail is a prong-like bone near its nostril. The skull has an enormous eye socket and a long sword-like snout that it used to eat fish and squid.

There are also clues as to how this particular specimen lived and died.

"The limb bones and teeth are malformed in such a way that points to serious injury or disease while the animal was still alive," said study co-author Dr Erin Maxwell from the State Museum of Natural

The 'sword dragon' is one of numerous ichthyosaur fossils that have been found along Dorset's Jurassic Coast since the first discoveries of pioneering palaeontologist Mary Anning in the early 1800s.

Chris Moore discovered the 'sword dragon' in cliffs at Golden Cap in Dorset after a storm. This "sword dragon" was discovered in 2001 by fossil hunter Chris Moore and then acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada where it took more than 15 years to be fully analysed.

"I don't wish to blow my own ichthyosaur trumpet but I have found a few of them," Mr Moore said on a video call from Dorset. The actual number he's unearthed is somewhere in the region of 15, with several of them, like the "sword dragon", turning out to be new species.

Mr Moore says he is planning to celebrate the new discovery but has yet to decide exactly how.

"Champagne or a mug of tea, I'm not sure which yet," he says.

Full article and see more pictures:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdjzvzzy0mxo>

Hippos once roamed frozen Germany with mammoths

October 9, 2025 | Dr. Stefanie Mikulla

Hippos, today restricted to sub-Saharan Africa, survived in central Europe far longer than previously assumed. Analyses of bone finds demonstrate that hippos inhabited the Upper Rhine Graben sometime between approximately 47,000 and 31,000 years ago, well into the last ice age. An international research team lead by the University of Potsdam and the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen Mannheim with the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie now published a study on this in the journal Current Biology.

The Upper Rhine Graben is an important continental climate archive. Animal bones that have survived for thousands of years in gravel and sand deposits are a valuable source for research. "It's amazing how well the bones have been preserved."



Photo credit: In the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen a hippo reconstruction meets a mammoth skeleton.

Rebecca Kind

emphasizes Dr. Ronny Friedrich, expert in age determination at the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie.

The team examined numerous hippopotamus finds and combined paleogenomic and radiocarbon analyses. Ancient DNA sequencing showed that European ice age hippos are closely related to African hippos living today and belong to the same species. Radiocarbon dating confirmed their presence during a milder climatic phase in the middle Weichselian glaciation.

Additional genome-wide analysis indicated very low genetic diversity, suggesting that the population in the Upper Rhine Graben was small and isolated. These results and further fossil evidence show that heat-loving hippos appeared in the same time frame as species adapted to cold temperatures, such as mammoths and woolly rhinos.

“The results demonstrate that hippos did not vanish from middle Europe at the end of the last interglacial, as previously assumed,” summarizes first author Dr. Patrick Arnold. “Therefore, we should re-analyze other continental European hippo fossils traditionally attributed to the last interglacial period.”

Prof. Dr. Wilfried Rosendahl, general director of the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen Mannheim and project leader of “Eiszeitfenster Oberrheingraben” is convinced that ice age research still holds many exciting questions: “The current study provides important new insights which impressively prove that ice age was not the same everywhere, but local peculiarities taken together form a complex overall picture – similar to a puzzle. It would now be interesting and important to further examine other heat-loving animal species, attributed so far to the last interglacial.”

Taken from Science Daily article:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/10/251026021740.htm>

Full study found here:

[https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822\(25\)01205-9](https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822(25)01205-9)

Florida Fossil Hunters

2025 Christmas Auction

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Agatized Coral | (Min. Bid 2000) |
| 2. Meteorite | |
| 3. Ammonite | (Jr.) |
| 4. Cactus Amethyst | (Min. Bid 1.500) |
| 5. Fossil Stromatolite | (New Member) |
| 6. Cave Bear Teeth | (Min. Bid 5,000) |
| 7. Tree Fern Fossil | (Min. Bid 4,000) |
| 8. Fossil Collection, Morocco | (Jr.) |
| 9. Woolly Rhinoceros Tooth | (Min Bid 9,000) |
| 10. Sliced Ammonite | (Min. Bid 3,000) |
| 11. <i>Otodus Obliquus</i>
Shark Tooth | (Min. Bid 7,000) |
| 12. Mosasaur Tooth | (Min. Bid 3,500) |
| 13. Whale Tooth | (Min. Bid 1,500) |
| 14. Tiger Shark Teeth | (Min. Bid 3,000) |
| 15. Sloth Tooth, <i>Glossotherium Harlani</i> | (Min. Bid 2,000) |
| 16. Fossil Fish, <i>Knightia</i> | (Min. Bid 2,000) |
| 17. Megalodon Shark Tooth | (Min. Bid 6,000) |
| 18. Fossil Bison Tooth land
Cannon Bone | (New Member) |
| 19. Florida Fossils Collection | (Min. Bid (3,000) |
| 20. Whale Ear Bone | (Min. Bid 3,000) |
| 21. Shark Vertebra | (Min. Bid 2,000) |
| 22. Ammonite | (Min. Bid 1,500) |
| 23. Three Toed Horse Tooth,
<i>Hipparion</i> | (Min. Bid 1,500) |

FLORIDA FOSSIL HUNTERS

is a fun and educational group whose goal is to further our understanding of the prehistory of Florida. We encourage family participation and welcome explorers of all ages.

Membership options are listed to the right.

Meetings are usually held on the third Saturday of the month but may vary with club activities. Check the website for the date and location of the next meeting or call one of the officers.

Officers:

President	Salvatore Sansone	(321) 278-9294
Vice President	Steve Sharpe	(352) 552-2296
Secretary	Melissa Dunaway	(407) 461-8507
Treasurer	David Dunaway	(407) 786-8844

Chairs:

Field Trips	OPEN	
Fossil Fair	Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Fossil Auctions	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Fossil Bucks	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Fossil Lotto	Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Membership	Ken Sellers	
Newsletter	Elise Cronin-Hurley, info@elisech.com	
Photography	John Heinsen	(407) 291-7672
Facebook	Salvatore Sansone	
	Ken Sellers	
Webmaster	Elise Cronin-Hurley, info@elisech.com	

Board of Directors:

Joyce Bittle	(407) 341-6366
Melissa Dunaway	(407) 461-8507
Marge Fantozi	(407) 256-5566
Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Ken Sellers	(407) 457-4117

*Florida Prehistorical Museum, Inc.
dba/ Florida Fossil Hunters*

Membership Application

MAIL in this form or Register ONLINE at
www.floridafossilhunters.com/membership

Name:			
Associate Members			
Address:			
Phone:			
Email:			
☐	New	☐	Renewal
Please list any interests, experience, talents or just plain enthusiasm, which you would like to offer to the club:			

Family membership: \$25

Individual membership: \$20

Please make your checks payable to:

Florida Fossil Hunters
Post Office Box 540404
Orlando, Florida 32854-0404

Associate members are people in the same household, included at no extra charge, 2 adult votes per household with Family Membership. Per our insurance policy, family membership covers married couples and children. All other individuals must have separate individual membership to be covered by our club insurance.

Membership year runs from January to December.

Newsletter Policy

Articles must be submitted two weeks before publication date. to be considered for an issue. Emailed to: info@floridafossilhunters.com. Articles can be sent either as text in the email, in a google doc, or in Microsoft Word files (.docx). Please note in subject of email 'FFH News: [article or info]

Florida Fossil Hunters

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Meetings 3pm at OSC | Paleontology for Kids at 2pm and alternative time and location noted when applicable.

2025 Meeting Meeting Schedule

Saturday, November 15
2pm Paleontology for Kids
3pm Meeting
FFH meeting at OSC

FFH Annual Christmas Party and Fossil Bucks Auction

Saturday, December 6th
4:00pm | Page 2 for details.

2026 Calendar coming soon to
the website
www.floridafossilhunter.com

SEE INSIDE

for more information on events



Join Our Facebook group:
www.facebook.com/groups/floridafossilhunters

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Email info@floridafossilhunters.com to share articles, questions, & comments

Florida Fossil Hunters

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