

## Junior Paleontologists Journal – Week 7



Welcome back Junior Paleontologists!

**Dinosaur Detectives from last week:**

How many kinds of birds did  
you see?



Answer: I counted 47 on this picture. They live all over the world, on all continents and in the seas. They are the most successful dinosaurs ever!

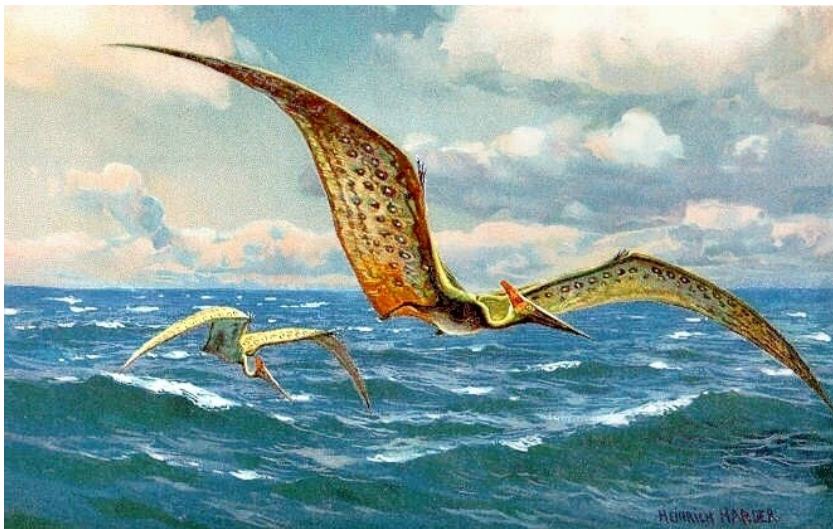
**Dinosaur artists:** which birds did you choose? Did you write a story or make a drawing?

This week we will learn about other reptiles that are not dinosaurs.

Many other kinds of large animals lived in the Age of Reptiles. When dinosaurs ruled the land, these other reptiles ruled the sky and the oceans.



Wikipedia



Wikipedia

These two pictures show the flying reptile called *Pteranodon*. Can you say its name?

You might already know that the first letter (P) is silent.

Say “turr-AN-oh-DON”  
Say it again.

You can see how one finger is so long it makes a wing, like the wing of a bat. Wingspan of some can be as wide as a school bus is long.

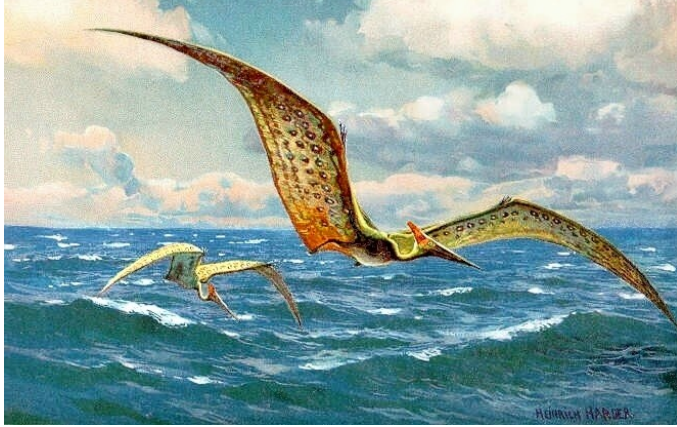
*Pteranodon* and Cretaceous birds spotted flying over MNA in 2007! (This was part of a special exhibit.)



Eric and Brian Gold, MNA photo

**Dinosaur Detectives:** What do you think *Pteranodon* ate? \_\_\_\_\_

**Dinosaur Artists:** Can you write a story about a *Pteranodon* and a dinosaur? Maybe along a shoreline? Or, can you make a drawing or painting of a *Pteranodon* flying over a dinosaur that is on a shoreline?

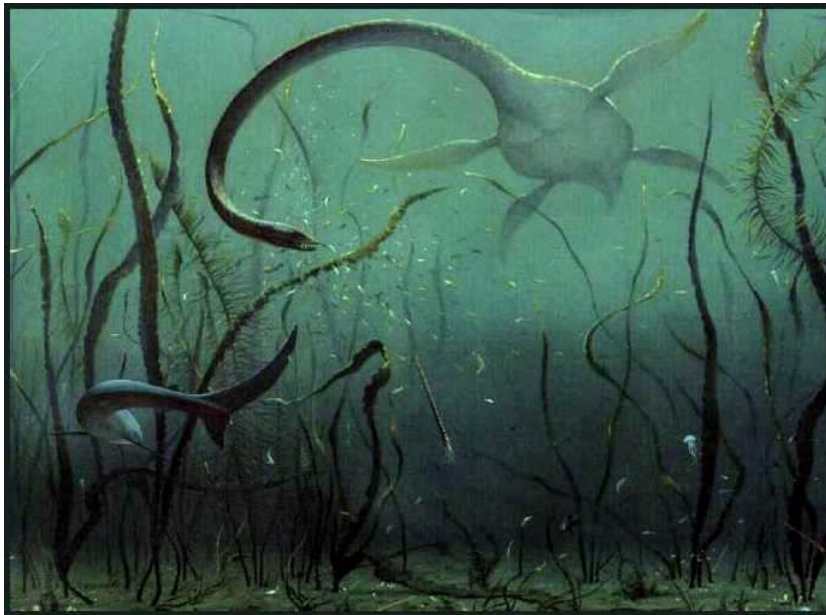


**Dinosaur Detectives from yesterday:** What did Pteranodon eat?

Answer: Fish! They could glide over the water like a pelican or an eagle and capture fish with their jaws or their feet.

**Dinosaur artists from yesterday:** Did you write a story or make a painting?

Now let's look at some awesome reptiles that swam in the ocean when dinosaurs walked on land. Long neck plesiosaurs were as long as a school bus, with a very long, long, long, long, long neck. And small head, like the one in this picture. This kind of plesiosaur is rare in our area.



Wikipedia

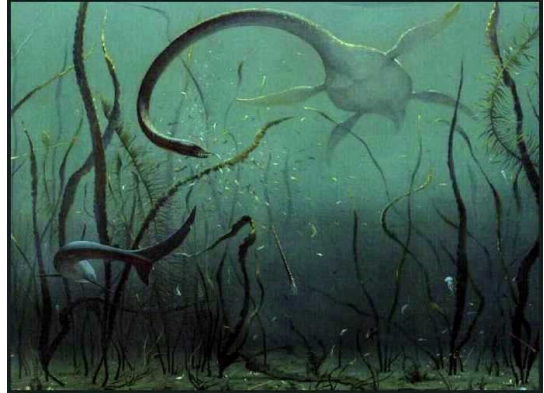
**Dinosaur Detectives:** Can you imagine what this long-neck plesiosaur ate? Remember—this one is as long as a school bus!

**Dinosaur Artists:** Can you make a drawing or a painting with a long neck plesiosaur swimming in the ocean? Or write a poem or story about one?



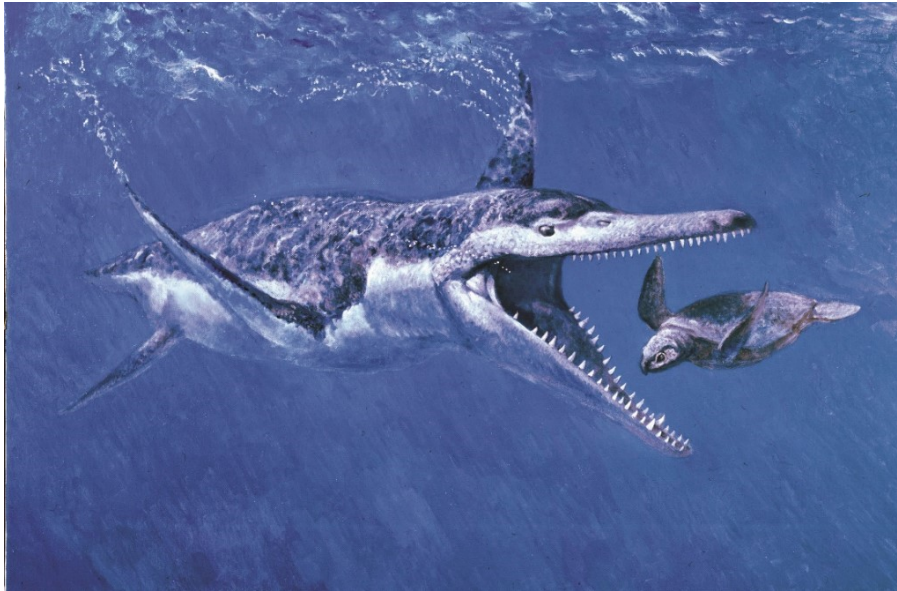
**Dinosaur Detectives from yesterday:** What did the long neck plesiosaur eat?

Answer: You are right! They ate FISH!  
But also giant squids with shells, and other animals.



**Dinosaur Artists from yesterday:** Did you make a picture or write a story or a poem?

Today will look at another kind of plesiosaur – the Short Neck Plesiosaurs. They are close relatives of the long neck plesiosaurs, but the short neck plesiosaurs have short neck and HUGE head and jaws and teeth. Lots of teeth, like about 100.



Dan Varner

Can you see the paddles?

These were like the paddles in sea turtles or the “wings” of penguins. MNA has a big collection of short neck plesiosaurs.

**Dinosaur Detectives:** What do you think these plesiosaurs ate?

**Dinosaur Artists:** Draw or paint a picture of a short neck plesiosaur swimming in the ocean, or write a poem or a story:

**Dinosaur Detectives from yesterday:** What do you think these plesiosaurs ate?



Answer: YES! Of course! They ate fish, and turtles, and sharks, and anything else, with all those teeth. They were awesome predators. You are awesome, Junior Paleontologists!

**Dinosaur artists from yesterday:** Did you make a drawing or a painting, or write a poem or story?

**Today**—more about short neck plesiosaurs: Here are two pictures showing a paleontologist in a MNA excavation of a short-neck plesiosaur in Utah.



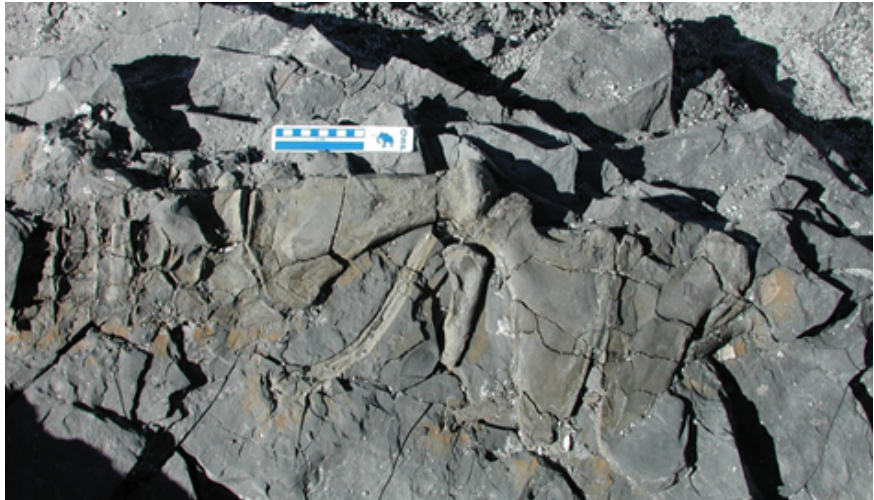
This is called an excavation quarry.

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The bones in the quarry are in this picture.

Can you make out the paddle bones?



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This picture shows the complete paddle in the lab with all the toe bones. This was a spectacular discovery.



MNA

**Dinosaur Detectives:** This paddle is from the rear leg. It also shows the hip bones. How many toes does it have? How is it different from YOUR toes?

**Dinosaur Artists:** Can you draw or paint a short neck plesiosaur that shows the paddles swimming? Or can you write a poem or a story?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing or written response.

Do you have any plesiosaur questions for Dinosaur Dave?????

**Tomorrow:** a plesiosaur mystery!

**Dinosaur Detectives from yesterday:** How many toes are there in the plesiosaur paddle?



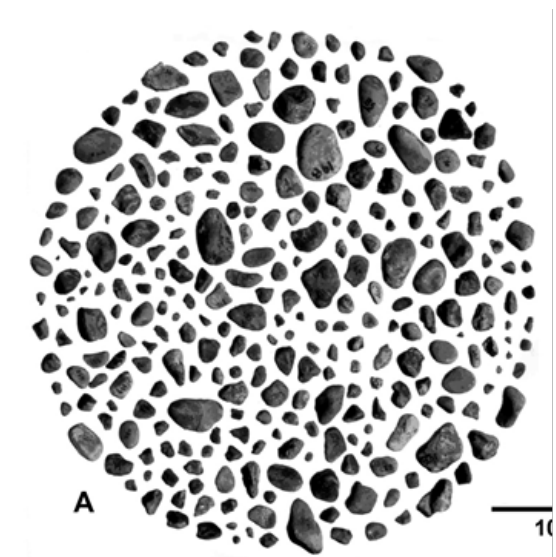
MNA

Answer: You are correct. FIVE! Just like in your foot. How is it different? Lots of extra bones in each toe. This gave them more power in swimming.

**Dinosaur artists from yesterday:** Did you make a drawing or a painting? Or write a poem or story?

**Now, here is a plesiosaur mystery:**  
What are all these stones?

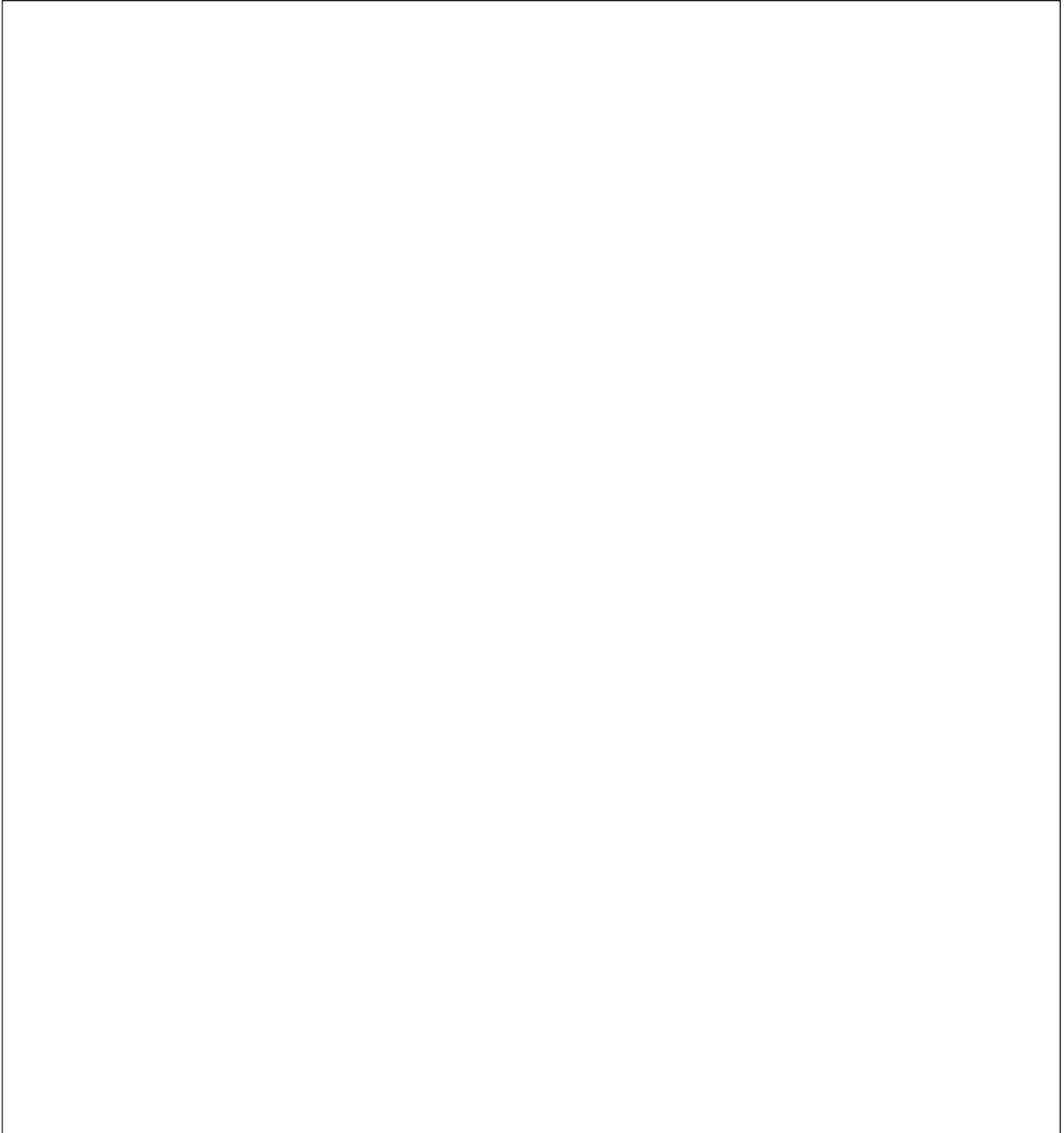
**Dinosaur Detectives:** Can you come up with some ideas on what these stones are? Can you count how many stones are in the picture?



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The largest one is about the size of a big marble, the smallest is smaller than a pea.

**Dinosaur Artists:** Can you make a drawing or a picture that shows what these stones are? Or write a mystery poem or story?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing or written response.

Answer for this week's question will be in the packet for Week 8, so you have lots of time to think about this mystery!!