

The Cryptid Vault Field Guide

A free sample: thirteen of the most reported creatures on
Earth.

13 CREATURES · THE CRYPTID VAULT

How to read this guide

Every entry is documented folklore and reported sighting, not a claim that the creature exists. Each is filed by the strongest class of evidence anyone has offered for it, from physical-evidence claims down to pure folklore and the openly debunked. Danger reflects the reputation in the accounts, not a verified threat.

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This is the free sample. The complete Cryptid Vault Field Guide covers all 165 creatures in the vault, each with its watercolor plate, sources, and the full record. See cryptidvault.com/field-guide.



Bigfoot

also known as Sasquatch, Skunk Ape

The towering ape-man of the Pacific Northwest, glimpsed in fog and legend for centuries.

Region	North America	Habitat	Forest,Mountain
Body type	Humanoid,Giant mammal	Evidence	Photo/video claims
Danger	Low		

The legend of Bigfoot stretches back centuries before European settlers arrived in North America. Indigenous peoples across the Pacific Northwest told stories of wild, hairy giants living deep in the forests. The Sts'ailes people of British Columbia called it Sasquatch, meaning "wild man" or "hairy man." The Lummi called it Ts'emekwes. These were not casual campfire tales. They were woven into spiritual traditions and treated with the same seriousness as any other part of the natural world.

Modern sightings began picking up in the early 20th century. In 1924, a group of miners near Mount St. Helens reported being attacked by rock-throwing ape-men in what became known as the Ape Canyon incident. Albert Ostman, a lumberjack, claimed he was kidnapped by a family of Sasquatch in 1924 near Toba Inlet, British Columbia, though he did not tell his story publicly until 1957. In 1958, construction worker Jerry Crew found massive footprints at a road-building site in Bluff Creek, California. A plaster cast of those prints made front-page news, and the name "Bigfoot" was born.

The most famous piece of evidence came on October 20, 1967. Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin filmed a large, upright, hair-covered figure walking along a sandbar at Bluff Creek. The 59.5 seconds of 16mm footage show

what appears to be a female hominid striding away from the camera and briefly turning to look back. Frame 352 of that film has become one of the most analyzed images in cryptozoology. Supporters point to the creature's muscle movement, proportions, and gait as proof that no human in a costume could replicate it. Skeptics counter that costume designer Philip Morris claimed to have sold Patterson a gorilla suit, though his account has been disputed.

Witnesses consistently describe Bigfoot as standing 7 to 10 feet tall, weighing 500 to 800 pounds, covered in dark brown or reddish-black hair, and walking upright with a long stride. Many reports mention a powerful, foul odor. Footprints found across North America often measure 15 to 20 inches long and show dermal ridges, which some analysts consider difficult to fake.

Skeptics attribute sightings to misidentified black bears walking on hind legs, hoaxes, and psychological suggestion. The absence of bones, a body, or any definitive physical specimen remains the strongest argument against Bigfoot's existence. Despite this, the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization has cataloged thousands of sighting reports across every U.S. state except Hawaii. Bigfoot has become a cultural icon, appearing in films, television series, commercials, and as the unofficial mascot of the Pacific Northwest.



Loch Ness Monster

also known as Nessie

The legendary lake serpent of Scotland, photographed, sonar-scanned, and never found.

Region	Europe	Habitat	Lake
Body type	Serpentine,Aquatic	Evidence	Photo/video claims
Danger	Low		

The earliest recorded mention of a mysterious creature in the Scottish Highlands near Loch Ness dates to 565 AD. In a biography of Saint Columba, the Irish monk reportedly encountered a beast in the River Ness and commanded it to retreat. For centuries after, locals told stories of a water horse, or "each-uisge," inhabiting the deep loch. But the modern legend began on May 2, 1933, when John and Aldie Mackay reported seeing an enormous creature rolling and plunging in the water. Their account appeared in the Inverness Courier, and the world took notice.

The most iconic image associated with Nessie is the so-called Surgeon's Photograph, published in the Daily Mail on April 21, 1934. Attributed to London gynecologist Robert Kenneth Wilson, it appeared to show a long neck and small head rising from the water. For 60 years it served as the primary visual "proof" of the monster. In 1994, however, the photo was revealed to be a hoax. Christian Spurling confessed on his deathbed that he, along with Marmaduke Wetherell and others, had attached a sculpted head and neck to a toy submarine.

Despite the debunking of that famous image, sightings have continued steadily. In 1954, a fishing boat's sonar detected a large object following the vessel at a depth of 480 feet. In 1972 and 1975, underwater photographs

taken by Robert Rines of the Academy of Applied Science appeared to show a diamond-shaped flipper and a long-necked body. These images remain controversial due to digital enhancement and unclear source material.

Witnesses most commonly describe a creature 15 to 40 feet long with a long neck, small head, and one or more humps visible above the waterline. Some reports mention flippers. The body is said to be dark gray or black. Loch Ness itself provides a plausible hiding place. It is the largest body of fresh water by volume in Great Britain, stretching 23 miles long, over 750 feet deep, and filled with peat-darkened water that limits visibility to a few feet.

Skeptics suggest sightings can be explained by boat wakes, floating logs, large eels, swimming deer, or optical illusions caused by the loch's unusual surface conditions. A 2019 environmental DNA survey of the loch found no evidence of large reptilian or mammalian DNA but did detect significant amounts of eel DNA, leading researchers to suggest that a very large European eel could account for some sightings. Nessie remains Scotland's most beloved mystery, drawing hundreds of thousands of tourists to the Highlands each year.



Mothman

also known as The Bird, Red-Eyed Demon

A winged humanoid with blazing red eyes, haunting Point Pleasant before disaster struck.

Region	North America	Habitat	Urban,Forest
Body type	Humanoid,Avian	Evidence	Eyewitness reports
Danger	Unknown		

On the evening of November 15, 1966, two young married couples were driving near an abandoned munitions plant outside Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Roger and Linda Scarberry, along with Steve and Mary Mallette, reported seeing a large gray creature with glowing red eyes standing near the building. When they drove away, the creature reportedly spread enormous wings and followed their car at speeds exceeding 100 miles per hour. The Scarberrys and Mallettes were so shaken that they drove directly to the Mason County courthouse and reported the encounter to Deputy Millard Halstead, who later said the witnesses were clearly terrified.

Over the next 13 months, more than 100 people in the Point Pleasant area reported seeing a similar being. Witnesses consistently described a creature standing 6 to 7 feet tall, with a 10 to 15-foot wingspan and large, luminous red eyes set in what appeared to be the chest or shoulders rather than a distinct head. The skin was described as dark gray. The creature became known as the Mothman after a local newspaper editor coined the name.

The sightings occurred during a period of other strange phenomena in the area. Residents reported UFO activity, visits from mysterious "Men in Black," and poltergeist-like disturbances. On December 15, 1967, the

Silver Bridge connecting Point Pleasant to Gallipolis, Ohio collapsed during rush-hour traffic, killing 46 people. Author John Keel, who had been investigating the Mothman sightings, connected the creature to the bridge collapse in his 1975 book "The Mothman Prophecies." He suggested the Mothman was a harbinger of disaster.

Skeptical researchers have proposed that witnesses may have seen a large barred owl or a sandhill crane, both of which have wingspans of several feet and eyes that can appear to glow red when caught in headlights due to a reflective layer behind the retina. The abandoned TNT plant area where the first sighting occurred was known to harbor large colonies of barn owls.

The Mothman has become central to Point Pleasant's identity. The town erected a 12-foot stainless steel Mothman statue in 2003 and hosts an annual Mothman Festival each September. The Mothman Museum draws visitors from around the world. Whether the Mothman was a misidentified bird, a collective hallucination, or something else entirely, it remains one of the most compelling and well-documented cryptid flaps in American history.



Megalodon

also known as Meg, Giant White Shark, *Carcharocles megalodon*

The largest shark that ever lived went extinct 3.6 million years ago, unless the deep ocean is hiding something.

Region	Oceania, North America, South America, Africa	Habitat	Ocean
Body type	Aquatic	Evidence	Debunked/disputed
Danger	High		

Otodus megalodon was not a legend. It was a real apex predator that dominated the world's oceans from roughly 23 million to 3.6 million years ago during the Miocene and Pliocene epochs. What places the Megalodon in the cryptid category is the persistent belief among some that this enormous shark may still survive in the deep ocean today.

The evidence for Megalodon's past existence is abundant. Fossilized teeth, some measuring over 7 inches long, have been found on every continent. Based on tooth size and comparison with modern great white sharks, scientists estimate Megalodon reached lengths of 50 to 65 feet, with some estimates pushing toward 80 feet. Its jaws could open wide enough to swallow a small car. Bite marks on fossilized whale bones confirm that Megalodon fed on large marine mammals.

The idea that Megalodon might still be alive gained popular traction after a 2013 Discovery Channel mockumentary, "Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives," which blended fictional footage with documentary-style

presentation. The program drew record viewership and widespread criticism from scientists for misleading the public. Despite disclaimers, surveys showed a significant portion of viewers believed the shark might still exist.

Proponents of a surviving Megalodon point to the vastness of the deep ocean, which remains largely unexplored. They cite rare catches of presumed-extinct species like the coelacanth, rediscovered alive in 1938, as evidence that large marine animals can evade detection. Some have suggested that deep-sea megafauna could inhabit ocean trenches where human observation is virtually impossible.

Marine biologists counter these claims with several compelling arguments. Megalodon was a warm-water predator that relied on coastal nurseries and large marine mammal prey. The cooling of ocean temperatures during the Pliocene likely destroyed its habitat. A predator of that size would require enormous quantities of food and would leave detectable traces in the marine ecosystem, including bite marks on whale carcasses, which have not been found in modern samples. Additionally, Megalodon teeth, which shed continuously throughout the animal's life, would accumulate on the ocean floor. No Megalodon tooth younger than 3.6 million years has ever been found.

The Megalodon occupies a unique position in cryptozoology as a creature whose past existence is scientifically confirmed but whose present survival is considered extremely unlikely by the scientific community. It continues to fascinate the public and has become a staple of popular culture, appearing in films, video games, and novels.



Skinwalker

also known as Yee Naaldlooshii, Skin-walker

A Navajo witch who wears the skins of animals and walks between worlds.

Region	North America	Habitat	Desert,Mountain,Forest
Body type	Shapeshifter	Evidence	Eyewitness reports
Danger	High		

The Skinwalker, or yee naaldlooshii in the Navajo language, is one of the most feared figures in Navajo tradition. The name translates roughly to "by means of it, it goes on all fours." In Navajo belief, a Skinwalker is a medicine person who has chosen to use their knowledge for evil purposes, gaining the power to transform into any animal by wearing its skin. This is not a creature that exists outside human society. It is a person who has crossed a moral boundary that cannot be uncrossed.

Navajo cultural tradition is clear that Skinwalkers are not mythological. They are considered real threats, and discussing them openly is taboo. Many Navajo people are reluctant to share details with outsiders, believing that speaking about Skinwalkers can attract their attention. What is generally understood is that a person becomes a Skinwalker by committing a profound act of evil, often described as killing a close family member. This act grants them access to shape-shifting abilities and other supernatural powers, including the ability to read minds, mimic voices, and cause illness.

Reports from the Navajo Nation and surrounding areas describe encounters with beings that move unnaturally fast, appear as animals that behave in strange ways (such as running alongside cars at highway speeds), or

manifest as half-human, half-animal figures. Witnesses often report feeling an intense sense of dread. Some accounts describe creatures with glowing yellow or red eyes that stare through windows at night.

The broader American public became aware of Skinwalker lore through coverage of the so-called Skinwalker Ranch in Utah's Uintah Basin. In 1996, Terry and Gwen Sherman sold their ranch after experiencing cattle mutilations, UFO sightings, and encounters with a wolf-like creature that appeared immune to gunfire. Billionaire Robert Bigelow purchased the property and funded research through the National Institute for Discovery Science. The ranch has since been featured in books, documentaries, and a History Channel television series.

Skeptics view Skinwalker accounts as culturally specific manifestations of fear and superstition, amplified by psychological priming and the power of suggestion. They note that encounters typically occur in low-light conditions and are difficult to verify. But for the Navajo people, the Skinwalker is not a subject for debate or entertainment. It is a deeply serious element of their spiritual worldview, and its inclusion in popular media has been a source of discomfort and frustration for many members of the Navajo Nation.



Yeti

also known as Abominable Snowman, Meh-Teh, Migoi

The ape-man of the Himalayas, tracked through snow but never confirmed.

Region	Asia	Habitat	Mountain
Body type	Humanoid,Giant mammal	Evidence	Physical evidence claims
Danger	Medium		

High in the Himalayas, stories of a wild, ape-like creature have circulated among Sherpa communities for centuries. Known as Yeti, or sometimes Meh-Teh (meaning "man-bear"), the creature is deeply embedded in Tibetan and Nepali folklore. The Yeti occupies a spiritual role in some traditions, serving as a guardian of the mountains and a symbol of the boundary between the human world and the wilderness beyond.

Western awareness of the Yeti began in 1832, when British explorer B.H. Hodgson reported that his Nepali guides had fled in fear from a tall, bipedal creature covered in dark hair. In 1921, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Howard-Bury led a British reconnaissance expedition to Mount Everest and observed dark figures moving across a snowfield at 17,000 feet. Porters identified the tracks left behind as belonging to "metoh-kangmi," which journalist Henry Newman mistranslated as "abominable snowman." The name stuck.

The most significant evidence came in 1951, when mountaineer Eric Shipton photographed a series of large footprints in the snow on the Menlung Glacier at roughly 20,000 feet. The prints measured 13 inches long and 8 inches wide, with clear toe impressions. Shipton's photographs remain among the most scrutinized images in cryptozoology. Some analysts have argued the prints were made by a bear whose tracks melted and expanded in the sun, while others maintain the proportions are inconsistent with any known animal.

In 1960, Sir Edmund Hillary led an expedition specifically to search for the Yeti. The team examined a Yeti scalp preserved at Khumjung monastery and concluded it was made from the skin of a serow, a goat-like Himalayan animal. This finding disappointed believers but did not end the search.

Witnesses who claim to have seen the Yeti describe a bipedal creature standing 6 to 8 feet tall, covered in reddish-brown or dark hair, with a conical head and powerful build. Footprints are the most commonly reported evidence, appearing in remote snowfields far from human settlement.

Modern genetic studies have tested hair samples attributed to the Yeti and found they belong to Himalayan brown bears, Tibetan blue bears, or domestic animals. A 2017 study published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society analyzed nine purported Yeti specimens and identified eight as bears and one as a dog. Despite these findings, the Yeti endures as a powerful symbol of the unknown, and Himalayan mountaineers continue to report encountering unexplained footprints in the snow.



Kraken

also known as Sea Monster, Hafgufa

The ship-swallowing sea beast of Norse legend, now partially explained by giant squid.

Region	Europe	Habitat	Ocean
Body type	Aquatic	Evidence	Debunked/disputed
Danger	High		

Sailors in the North Atlantic have told stories of a massive sea creature capable of dragging ships beneath the waves for at least a thousand years. Norse sagas from the 13th century describe the Kraken as an island-sized beast lurking off the coasts of Norway and Iceland. The creature was said to create dangerous whirlpools when it submerged and could pull entire vessels down with its enormous arms.

The first detailed scientific description came from Erik Pontoppidan, the Bishop of Bergen, Norway, who included the Kraken in his 1752 work "The Natural History of Norway." Pontoppidan described a creature so large that it could be mistaken for a series of small islands. He recorded fishermen's accounts of hauling up enormous quantities of fish above the Kraken's resting place, suggesting it attracted prey. Carolus Linnaeus, the father of modern taxonomy, initially included the Kraken in his 1735 edition of "Systema Naturae" as a cephalopod, though he removed it from later editions.

The mystery of the Kraken began to resolve in the 19th century when giant squid specimens started washing ashore. In 1853, a giant squid beak was recovered from the stomach of a sperm whale, proving the existence of enormous cephalopods. In 1873, two fishermen off the coast of Newfoundland reportedly fought off a giant squid that grabbed their boat, cutting off one of its tentacles with a hatchet. The severed tentacle measured 19

feet. Throughout the late 1800s, multiple giant squid carcasses washed up on beaches in Newfoundland and Norway, some measuring 40 feet or more.

The giant squid (*Architeuthis dux*) is now recognized as a real animal that can reach lengths of 43 feet or more. Its even larger relative, the colossal squid (*Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*), can grow to at least 46 feet and possesses rotating hooks on its tentacles. The first live giant squid was filmed in its natural deep-sea habitat by Japanese researchers Tsunemi Kubodera and Kyoichi Mori in 2004, at a depth of 2,950 feet.

While the discovery of giant and colossal squid has provided a plausible biological basis for Kraken legends, some cryptozoologists argue that even larger, undiscovered cephalopods may exist in the deep ocean. Sucker marks found on sperm whales have occasionally measured larger than those attributable to known squid species. Whether the Kraken of legend was simply an early encounter with giant squid or something more remains an open question.



Wendigo

also known as Windigo, Witiko, Wihtikow

A gaunt, insatiable spirit of the frozen north that was once human.

Region	North America	Habitat	Forest,Mountain
Body type	Humanoid,Shapeshifter	Evidence	Folklore only
Danger	High		

The Wendigo comes from the oral traditions of Algonquian-speaking peoples across the northern forests of North America, including the Ojibwe, Cree, Saulteaux, and Innu. It is not merely a monster story. The Wendigo is a cautionary figure tied to the very real dangers of winter starvation and the moral corruption that can follow from desperation. In many tellings, the Wendigo is a person who has resorted to cannibalism and, as a result, has been transformed into something no longer human.

Traditional descriptions vary across communities, but common elements appear consistently. The Wendigo is described as emaciated to the point of skeletal thinness, with sunken eyes, ash-gray skin stretched tight over bones, and an overpowering stench of decay. Despite its gaunt appearance, it is enormous, sometimes described as growing larger with each person it consumes, so that its hunger can never be satisfied. It embodies insatiable greed. The more it eats, the hungrier it becomes.

Some of the most striking historical accounts come from fur traders and missionaries who documented Indigenous communities' encounters with what they understood as Wendigo possession. In 1878, a Plains Cree man named Swift Runner killed and ate his wife and five children during a winter in which food was available

at a Hudson's Bay Company post just 25 miles away. He was tried, convicted, and executed. His case is one of several in which individuals claimed to be possessed by the Wendigo spirit.

The concept of "Wendigo psychosis" became a subject of academic debate in the 20th century. Some anthropologists, including Morton Teicher in 1960, described it as a culture-bound syndrome in which individuals developed an intense craving for human flesh and a fear of becoming a cannibal. Others have questioned whether Wendigo psychosis was a genuine psychological condition or a Western misinterpretation of Indigenous spiritual beliefs.

In modern popular culture, the Wendigo has been adopted by horror media, often reimagined as an antlered, deer-skulled monster. This depiction, while visually striking, bears little resemblance to the original Algonquian traditions. Many Indigenous scholars and community members have expressed concern about the appropriation and distortion of Wendigo stories, which hold deep spiritual significance. The Wendigo remains a powerful symbol of the dangers of greed, isolation, and the loss of one's humanity.



Chupacabra

also known as Goat Sucker, El Chupacabras

The blood-draining predator that left livestock drained across Latin America.

Region	North America, South America	Habitat	Desert,Forest
Body type	Reptilian,Canine	Evidence	Physical evidence claims
Danger	Medium		

The Chupacabra, or "goat-sucker," burst into public awareness in 1995 in Puerto Rico. In March of that year, eight sheep were found dead in the town of Orocovis, each drained of blood through small circular wounds. Over the following months, similar attacks were reported across the island. Chickens, goats, rabbits, and other livestock turned up dead with puncture wounds and no blood remaining in their bodies.

The name and the legend crystallized around the testimony of Madelyne Tolentino of Canovanas, Puerto Rico. In August 1995, Tolentino described seeing a creature approximately 4 to 5 feet tall, with large wraparound eyes, gray skin, spines running down its back, and thin, clawed arms. Her description became the template for the "classic" Chupacabra, and it spread rapidly through Puerto Rican and Latin American media.

The panic spread quickly beyond Puerto Rico. By 1996, Chupacabra reports were appearing in Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. Livestock deaths attributed to the creature were reported throughout Latin America and eventually in the southern United States, particularly Texas and Florida.

Around 2000, a second version of the Chupacabra emerged in the American Southwest. Ranchers in Texas began finding strange-looking canine carcasses, hairless and blue-gray with prominent spines along their backs.

Several of these animals were recovered and tested. In every case, DNA analysis identified them as coyotes, domestic dogs, or coyote-dog hybrids suffering from severe sarcoptic mange, a parasitic skin disease that causes hair loss, thickened skin, and a generally monstrous appearance.

Skeptical investigator Benjamin Radford spent five years researching the Chupacabra for his 2011 book "Tracking the Chupacabra." He noted that Tolentino's original description closely matched the alien-like creature from the 1995 science fiction film "Species," which she had seen shortly before her sighting. Radford argued that the original Chupacabra was a product of pop-culture influence and mass hysteria, while the Texas variant was simply misidentified sick canines.

Despite these explanations, the Chupacabra remains one of the most widely reported cryptids in the Americas. It occupies a unique space as a modern cryptid, having emerged entirely within the era of mass media and 24-hour news cycles. Its rapid spread across Latin America reflects both real anxieties about unexplained livestock deaths and the power of sensational storytelling in the information age.



Thylacine

also known as Tasmanian Tiger, Tasmanian Wolf, Thylacinus cynocephalus

Officially extinct since 1936, the Tasmanian tiger is the subject of more credible survival sightings than almost any other lost species.

Region	Oceania	Habitat	Forest
Body type	Canine	Evidence	Photo/video claims
Danger	Low		

The Thylacine, commonly known as the Tasmanian Tiger or Tasmanian Wolf, holds a unique position among cryptids. It is not a creature of myth or folklore. It was a real, well-documented marsupial carnivore that was driven to extinction in the 20th century. The question is not whether it existed, but whether it still does.

Thylacinus cynocephalus was the largest known carnivorous marsupial of modern times. It resembled a medium-sized dog with a stiff tail, sandy-brown fur marked with 13 to 21 dark stripes across its back and rump, and a distinctive ability to open its jaws to an unusually wide gape of nearly 80 degrees. It was native to mainland Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea. Mainland populations disappeared roughly 3,000 years ago, likely due to competition with dingoes. Tasmanian populations survived into the modern era but were hunted aggressively by European settlers who viewed them as livestock predators.

The Tasmanian government placed a bounty on Thylacines from 1888 to 1909, paying one pound per adult head. Combined with habitat destruction, disease, and competition from introduced dogs, the bounty system devastated the population. The last known wild Thylacine was shot by farmer Wilf Batty in 1930. The last

captive individual, known as Benjamin, died on September 7, 1936, at the Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart. Film footage of Benjamin pacing in his enclosure remains one of the most haunting pieces of wildlife documentation ever recorded.

Since 1936, there have been thousands of reported sightings across Tasmania and mainland Australia. The Australian Rare Fauna Research Association has documented over 3,800 reports on the mainland since 1936. In 1982, a researcher with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service reported a nighttime encounter with a Thylacine at close range. In 2017, a pair of detailed reports from far north Queensland prompted scientists to set up camera traps. No confirmed evidence was obtained.

Efforts to bring back the Thylacine through de-extinction technology are underway. In 2022, the University of Melbourne and Colossal Biosciences announced a partnership to attempt to resurrect the species using preserved DNA, gene editing, and a related marsupial as a surrogate. The Thylacine's genome has been fully sequenced from preserved specimens.

Whether a remnant population survives in the remote wilderness of Tasmania or mainland Australia remains unconfirmed. The Thylacine is a powerful symbol of human-caused extinction and the longing to undo it.



Jersey Devil

also known as The Leeds Devil

A bat-winged, hooved terror born from a colonial curse in the Pine Barrens.

Region	North America	Habitat	Forest,Swamp
Body type	Humanoid,Avian	Evidence	Repeated sightings
Danger	Medium		

The Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey have been haunted by reports of a winged, hooved creature for nearly three centuries. According to the most popular origin story, the Jersey Devil was the 13th child of a woman named Jane Leeds, born in 1735. Depending on the version, Mrs. Leeds either cursed the child out of frustration or the child was cursed because of her association with the occult. Upon birth, the baby reportedly transformed into a creature with bat wings, hooves, a forked tail, and a horned head, then flew up the chimney and into the Pine Barrens.

Historical records show that the Leeds family was real. Daniel Leeds, Jane's father-in-law, published almanacs in the late 1600s that contained astrological symbols and occult references, earning him condemnation from local Quakers. The Leeds family crest featured a wyvern, a dragon-like creature, which some researchers believe may have contributed to the legend.

The most dramatic episode in Jersey Devil history occurred during a single week in January 1909. From January 16 to 23, hundreds of people across more than 30 towns in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania reported seeing a strange, winged creature. Schools closed. Workers refused to leave their homes. Trolley companies

armed their drivers. The creature was reported to leave cloven hoofprints in the snow, sometimes on rooftops. The Philadelphia Zoo reportedly offered a \$10,000 reward for its capture.

Witness descriptions from the 1909 flap vary but generally agree on key features: a creature roughly 3 to 4 feet tall with a long neck, bat-like wings spanning 4 to 6 feet, cloven hooves, a pointed tail, and a piercing scream. Some witnesses described a face resembling a horse or ram.

Skeptics have proposed multiple explanations. The 1909 flap may have been driven by a combination of real animal sightings (sandhill cranes, great blue herons, or large owls), hoaxes, and mass hysteria fueled by newspaper coverage. Historian Brian Regal has argued that the "Leeds Devil" legend was partially manufactured by Benjamin Franklin's rival almanac as a way to discredit the Leeds family.

The Jersey Devil remains the official state demon of New Jersey and serves as the namesake of the state's NHL hockey team. Sightings continue to be reported sporadically in the Pine Barrens.



Beast of Gevaudan

also known as La Bete du Gevaudan, The Beast

A massive wolf-like predator terrorized rural France for three years, killing over 100 people before it was finally brought down.

Region	Europe	Habitat	Forest,Mountain
Body type	Canine	Evidence	Physical evidence claims
Danger	High		

Between 1764 and 1767, a large predatory animal terrorized the former province of Gevaudan in south-central France, in what is now the department of Lozere. The beast killed an estimated 100 to 300 people and injured many more, making it one of the deadliest animal attacks in recorded European history.

The first documented victim was 14-year-old Jeanne Boulet, found dead on June 30, 1764, near the village of Les Hubacs. Over the following months, the attacks escalated. Victims were often children and women tending livestock in isolated fields. The beast typically attacked the head and neck, and many victims were partially consumed. The attacks were savage enough that King Louis XV personally ordered hunts to destroy the creature.

Witnesses described the beast as larger than a wolf, roughly the size of a calf or donkey, with reddish-brown fur, a broad chest, a long tail with a tuft at the end, and an enormous mouth filled with large teeth. Some accounts mention a dark stripe along the back. The descriptions were notably inconsistent with a typical wolf, which led to speculation about more exotic animals.

The first animal killed as a candidate was a large gray wolf shot by Francois Antoine, the king's professional wolf-hunter, on September 21, 1765. The wolf was stuffed and presented at court, and the attacks were declared over. But they resumed within weeks.

The attacks finally ended on June 19, 1767, when local hunter Jean Chastel shot a large animal during a parish-organized hunt. According to legend, Chastel loaded his musket with silver bullets blessed by a priest. The animal's stomach reportedly contained human remains. The carcass was sent to Versailles but decomposed during transport and was never properly examined.

Historians and naturalists have proposed numerous identities for the beast: an unusually large wolf, a wolf-dog hybrid, a young or escaped hyena, or even a trained attack animal used by a serial killer. Cryptozoologists have suggested a relict population of Mesonychids, prehistoric predatory mammals. The most widely accepted modern theory is that the attacks were carried out by one or more unusually aggressive wolves, possibly supplemented by wolf-dog hybrids, in a region where rural populations were uniquely vulnerable due to the practice of sending children alone into pastures.



Michigan Dogman

also known as Dogman, Beast of Michigan, Dog Man

An upright canine terror first reported in 1887, stalking Michigan's north woods ever since.

Region	North America	Habitat	Forest
Body type	Canine,Humanoid	Evidence	Eyewitness reports
Danger	Medium		

The Michigan Dogman legend entered public consciousness in 1987, when disc jockey Steve Cook of WTCM-FM in Traverse City recorded a song called "The Legend" as an April Fools' Day prank. The song described a creature, half man and half dog, that had been seen every ten years in the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan since 1887. Cook expected the joke to last a day. Instead, the radio station was flooded with calls from people claiming to have seen exactly the creature he described.

The reports that poured in shared consistent details. Witnesses described a creature standing 6 to 7 feet tall on its hind legs, with the body of a muscular man and the head of a canine, usually a German shepherd or wolf. The creature was covered in dark fur, had pointed ears, and moved with a combination of bipedal and quadrupedal locomotion. Its eyes were often described as amber or blue and seemed to reflect light.

The most frequently cited early encounter predates Cook's song by decades. In 1938, Robert Fortney reported being attacked by five wild dogs near Paris, Michigan. One of the animals reportedly stood up on its hind legs before the pack fled. In 1961, a night watchman at a manufacturing plant in Big Rapids, Michigan reported seeing a large, dog-headed figure standing upright outside the facility.

Dogman sightings are not limited to Michigan. Similar creatures have been reported in Wisconsin (where they overlap with the Beast of Bray Road), Ohio, Kentucky, and throughout the Upper Midwest. Linda Godfrey, the journalist who first reported the Beast of Bray Road sightings in 1991, has documented hundreds of Dogman encounters across the United States in her books.

In 2007, a short piece of 8mm film known as the "Gable Film" surfaced, appearing to show a large, quadrupedal creature charging the camera operator. It was later revealed to be a hoax created by Mike Agrusa, who had used a ghillie suit.

Skeptics suggest that Dogman sightings can be attributed to bears standing upright, large feral dogs, wolves, or coyotes with mange. The power of suggestion following Cook's song and subsequent media coverage may have primed witnesses to interpret ambiguous sightings as Dogman encounters. Despite this, new reports continue to emerge from forested regions across the Midwest and beyond.

