

Gloucester Sea Serpent

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In 1817, Gloucester's sea serpent produced sworn testimony and a formal report. The harbor creature was never securely identified, but the attempt to document it left an unusually substantial archive.

STATUS	Contemporary testimony and report; identity unresolved
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Massachusetts, USA
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Cryptids
STORY HISTORY	Gloucester Harbor reports, August 1817

THE ACCOUNT

In August 1817, people around Gloucester Harbor reported a long, strange animal on the water. Local witnesses gave affidavits, and the Linnaean Society of New England assembled a formal report that same year. According to Cape Ann Museum's historical account, ship's carpenter Matt Gaffney even fired at the supposed creature on August 14. Engravings subsequently placed the serpent among recognizable harbor buildings and vessels. The unfamiliar visitor was fixed inside a place its audience could identify.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Wellcome Collection preserves the 1817 report, including its plates, as a historical publication. Cape Ann Museum documents the testimony and the continuing local memory. Those sources establish that the investigation happened and that people described something extraordinary; they do not by themselves identify a new marine species. The catalog record was inspected here, rather than every page of the surviving committee testimony, so precise body measurements are deliberately omitted.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

This is a monster file with an administrative spine. Dates, signatures and printed pages give the witnesses a durable place to speak. The tension comes from finding all that ordinary documentary machinery arranged around an animal that never became ordinary natural history.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Report of a committee of the Linnaean Society of New England

Wellcome Collection / Royal College of Surgeons of England

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j947ewu7>

Sea Serpent Sighting Anniversary Cruise

Cape Ann Museum

<https://www.capeannmuseum.org/event/sea-serpent-sighting-anniversary-cruise-sold-out/>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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<https://u225x.com/record/STR-CRYPT-025>