

NORTH AMERICA RESEARCH GROUP



Springtime

- **Kent Gibson's Bird Skull
Published in JVP!**
- **New Macrocheira Crab
Found in Lookingglass Fm**
- **Denver Fossil Fun**
- **Desmostylus Paleo Art**
- **Update on Greg Gentry's
Crabs at the Smithsonian**

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A note on issue sequencing: beginning in 2026, quarterly issues will be in the order spring, summer, fall, winter. Previously, issues were labeled winter, spring, summer, fall. This change will align issue labels to be the upcoming season instead of the previous season.

ON THE COVER

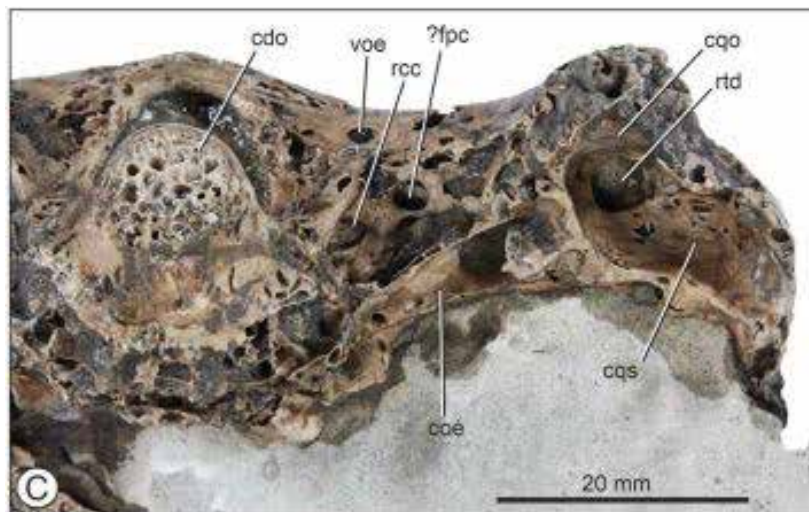
The redwood (*Sequoia*) 'Big Stump' at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, near Colorado Springs, Colorado. Florissant Formation, Eocene. Photo by James Verheyden.

MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage responsible stewardship of earth's paleontological resources; to promote scientific research, communication and public education.

KENT GIBSON'S BIRD SKULL PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY

By Bruce Thiel



Pelagornis orri skull from the Astoria Formation, Lincoln County, Oregon, Citation: Goedert, J.L., Gibson, K., Rich, M.A., Mayr, G. 2026. A Miocene pelagornithid skull from the Astoria Formation and other bones of bony-toothed birds from the late Eocene Keasey Formation, western Oregon (USA). *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*.

This open-access article studies a bird skull found by NARG member Kent Gibson! The article also includes a large bird vertebra that Greg Gentry found in the Keasey Fm., near Vernonia. I remember several years ago when Greg Gentry showed the vertebra to NARG member and veterinary doctor Dan O'Loughlin, who confirmed that it was a very large bird vert, and was as big as a human vertebra.

In the paper, Jim Goedert along with 3 other authors, including Gerald Mayr, renowned German fossil bird expert examine and compare various bird fossils, including *Pelagornis Orri* a giant bony-toothed seabird with a wingspan of 18-20 feet, from California, named after Philip Orr.

I called Kent to ask his reactions and to see if he could help me understand the paper. His comment: "I just find them, I can't explain them."

- Goedert, J.L., Gibson, K., Rich, M.A., Mayr, G. 2026. A Miocene pelagornithid skull from the Astoria Formation and other bones of bony-toothed birds from the late Eocene Keasey Formation, western Oregon (USA). *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02724634.2026.2645078>

Continued on page 4.

Another paper which may be of interest to NARG members:

- Goedert, J.L., Rich, M.A., Koci, T. 2026. A new Eocene species of Hydroides (Polychaeta, Serpulidae) from the Cowlitz Formation, Lewis County, Washington State, USA. *Zitteliana* 100:81–91. [DOI 10.3897/zitteliana.100.191011](https://doi.org/10.3897/zitteliana.100.191011)



We met Jim Goedert at his mother's place to give him a dolphin skull Bob Manley found some time ago to study. Jim was enroute to Newport to give Kent the bird skull he found to deliver to U of O. Here is Jim unpacking the bird skull to show us some of the features.



Here is Jim pointing to where the spinal cord would have entered the back of the skull. Keep in mind that this is an extremely large fossil bird, with a possible wingspan of 18' to 20' and a spinal cord as big as Jim's finger.



Most of the skull bones are extremely thin and fragile. Here is Jim showing us the approximate length of the beak, which was not preserved. His left thumb is in the eye socket. the top of the skull was partially eroded exposing a cast of the brain case.



Here is Jim pointing to where the salt removal glands would have been located.

NEW MACROCHEIRA CRAB FOUND IN OREGON'S LOOKINGGLASS FORMATION

By Bruce Thiel

Fossil *Macrocheira* crabs are rare in the fossil record in the Pacific Northwest, compared to the other more prevalent species, but many NARG crab collectors over the years have managed to occasionally find one or more. A large *Macrocheira sullivanii* was found in the Keasey Formation, and was described and named in 2016 for the late and former NARG president Bill Sullivan. Recently Bob Manley found a very small *Macrocheira* (smaller than a dime) in the southwest Oregon Lookingglass Formation. He sent it to Dr. Carrie Schweitzer, renowned crab expert at Kent State University, who described



The same *Macrocheira enoptra* showed in the image to the left, photographed by the author, Dr Carrie Schweitzer, and published in the Mizunami Museum Bulletin. To show greater detail for publication, the crab is whitened with vapors from heated ammonium chloride, to form a white contrasting coating, which can subsequently be washed off without damage to the fossil.



The new *Macrocheira enoptra*, photographed before it was sent to Dr. Schweitzer.

it as a new species and named it *Macrocheira enoptra*. It was published in the Bulletin of the Mizunami Fossil Museum in August 1, 2025. The article is open access and can be found by typing in the search bar: Bulletin of the Mizunami Fossil Museum, vol 52, no1, p.133-139, and it should come up.



A much larger version of the genus is the *Macrocheira sullivanii*, named after the late and former NARG president, Bill Sullivan. - one of two on display at the Rice NW Museum of Rocks and Minerals until March 31, 2027.

MILE HIGH FOSSIL FUN EXPLORING DENVER'S FOSSIL SITES

By James Verheyden

The Mile High City has a rich heritage of fossil collecting and a wealth of paleontological sites. Whether you're visiting Denver to hit the slopes, enjoy the mountains, or peruse the Denver Gem & Mineral Showcase, don't forget to make time to explore the region's remarkable fossil localities. Did you know the first Triceratops was discovered and identified in the Denver area in 1887?



Dinosaur tracks at Dinosaur Ridge.



A large exposed tracksite at Dinosaur Ridge.

DINOSAUR RIDGE

Dinosaur Ridge, on the west side of Denver in the town of Morrison (the type locality of the famous Morrison Formation), is home to historic dinosaur quarries that supplied bones to Othniel Charles Marsh during the infamous Bone Wars.

Today, however, the main attraction is the dinosaur trackways first uncovered during road construction to Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Considered by many to be among the best dinosaur tracksites in the world, visitors can experience these extraordinary fossils by walking or biking along the ridge, as the road is now closed to cars.

TRICERATOPS TRAIL

Triceratops Trail, located in Golden, showcases additional dinosaur footprints. Originally uncovered when the surrounding clay was mined for brickmaking, this fossil site now sits along the edge of Fossil Trace Golf Club.

Nearby, the Geology Trail at Colorado School of Mines highlights additional fossil



A Tyrannosaurus track preserved at Triceratops Trail.



A historic dragline at Triceratops Trail next to Fossil Trace Golf Course. Residence halls for the Colorado School of Mines are visible in the background.

tracks while exploring the region's geology. The Mines Museum of Earth Science is primarily mineral-focused, featuring an outstanding collection centered on Colorado specimens, but it also includes notable fossils and should not be missed.

DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE & SCIENCE

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science features an excellent fossil exhibit, Prehistoric Journey. This hall explores the history of life through a series of vignettes

highlighting fossil sites across the United States. The exhibit is thoughtfully arranged chronologically, tracing the development of life from its beginnings to the present day.

In addition to its permanent exhibits, the museum frequently hosts temporary displays showcasing ongoing paleontological research. At the time of writing, two such exhibits are on display: Teen Rex, which details the discovery of a teenage *Tyrannosaurus rex*, and After the Asteroid, which highlights rare mammal fossils from Corral Bluffs that document life immediately following the extinction of the dinosaurs.



A diorama showing a Entelodontidae 'hell pig' at DMNS.



Miocene mega fauna on display at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS).

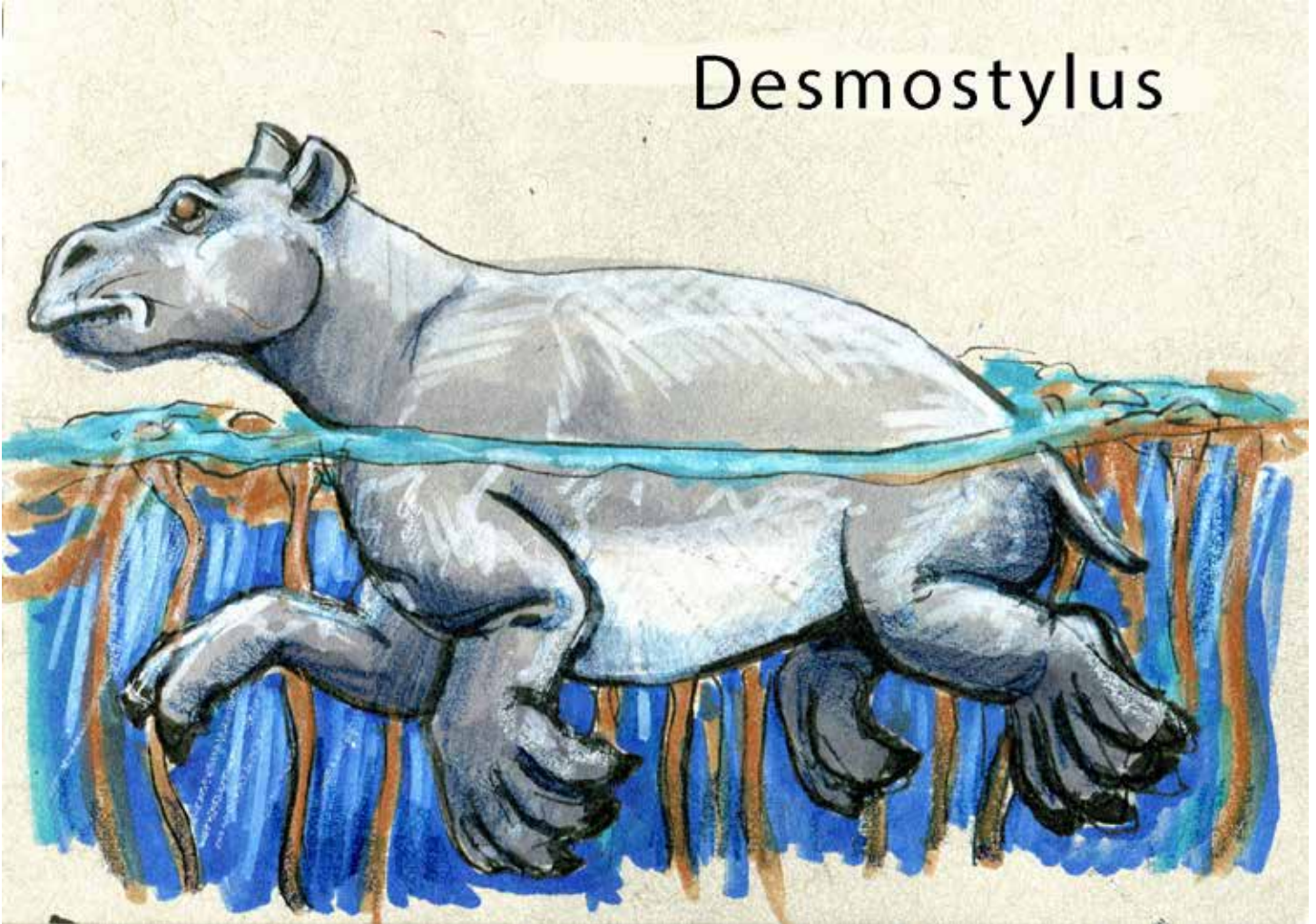


Fossil displays at DMNS.

DESMOSTYLUS PALEO ART

By Blane Bellerud

Desmostylus



UPDATE ON GREG GENTRY'S FOSSIL CRABS DONATED TO THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

By Bruce Thiel

The 2024 summer/fall NARG newsletter featured some of Greg Gentry's 300 crab collection that he donated to the Smithsonian from the Keasey Formation. Dr. Carrie Schweitzer, Kent State University professor along with one of her students, Danielle Sommerman, will be returning to the Smithsonian in May to further study Greg's collection. Here is an abstract Danielle made for a poster that she presented at the NE GSA Conference this March.



Prepared fossil crabs donated by NARG member Greg Gentry at their new home at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Abstract:

A substantial population size is crucial for conducting population ecology studies. Such studies are rarely possible in decapod paleoecology, with only a few dozen specimens per species at most available. Usually, too few specimens have been preserved and uncovered

for full population ecology studies to be conducted. Over two hundred specimens of *Macroacaena schencki* [Crustacea, Brachyura, Raninoida] are available in the USNM Smithsonian Collections. This species of raninid is a back-burrowing crab characterized by elongate carapaces and limbs. Specimens are found in the Keasey Formation of Northwest Oregon: an upper Eocene to lower Oligocene tuffaceous siltstone. Other decapod genera present in this formation include Megokkos, Branchioplax, and Pulalius. Through this research, we propose to determine the fossilization conditions that yielded higher quantities of specimen preservation, establish paleoecological data based on a large population size to be extrapolated to other decapod taxa, and apply our findings to modern raninids and implications for their survival in the present day. We will investigate the preservation of these specimens to determine potential reasons as to why there are more of them preserved than other decapod species in the same formation.

We tested three hypotheses: 1) preservation is determined by individual size and age, 2) preservation is determined by the chemistry of the surrounding matrix, and 3) preservation is determined by the back-burrowing habits of the species. To test these hypotheses, thin sections and chemical analysis, as well as individual measurements were made. Preliminary results indicate that a carapace width greater than 16.2 mm contributes to preservation. Specimen size ratios indicate that the population consists of adult crabs ranging in age from young to mature.

For more information on Greg Gentry's crab collection donation to the Smithsonian, see NARG Newsletter Volume 13, Number 2, Summer/Fall 2024 and Volume 14, Number 1, Winter 2025.

NARG MEMBERSHIP

Annual NARG membership dues are due January 1st of each year.

Membership Types

Individual	\$25
Family	\$40
Student	\$10

New Members: Please fill out and mail an [application](#) to the below address

Pay your membership dues with one of two convenient methods:

Mail a check to:

NARG (North America Research Group)
Membership
PO Box 233
Tualatin, OR 97062

Pay via credit card with PayPal:

[Family Membership](#)
[Individual Membership](#)
[Student Membership](#)

NARG LIBRARY

The NARG library has just become easier for members to use. The 430 books can be viewed by using the link below. Once you find a book you want, click on it and find its "index" number. Requests for books using the index number are made to danolough@aol.com. He will notify you if the book is already checked out. If it is not, he will bring it to the next NARG meeting. Members can check out 2 books at a time and should return them at one of the following 2 meetings.

<http://cloud.collectorz.com/danolough/books>

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Interested in submitting an article for the newsletter? We are looking for your articles, fossil collecting reports, book reviews, photos of your recent finds, and more. Send your contribution to james@verheydengeological.com for inclusion in the NARG newsletter. Make sure to attach photos separately in the email and do not include them in your manuscript.

FOSSIL CALENDAR

Aug 1 Northwest FossilFest
Oct 2-4 Portland Regional Gem & Mineral Show

NARG meetings typically occur on the first Wednesday of the month at the Tualatin Heritage Center at 7pm Pacific Time. Check the website nargpaleo.org and [Facebook](#) for meeting updates or meeting day variances.

For a listing of local gem and mineral shows, check out:
<https://mineralcouncil.wordpress.com/> <https://orerockon.com/>

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