



AS IT IS

Ancient Sea Creatures Found Off Coast of Angola

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Millions of years ago, many large, strange-looking sea creatures lived in what is now the South Atlantic Ocean. A **museum** in Washington, D.C., is giving visitors a chance to learn about these ancient animals.

Scientists say the continents of South America and Africa separated millions of years ago. As this happened, they say, many kinds of dangerous animals and other lifeforms settled in the newly formed body of water off the coast of Angola.

Today, scientists are studying ancient animal remains discovered on the Angolan coast. It is part of a project created by an international team of researchers called Projecto PaleoAngola. The researchers come from Angola, Portugal, The Netherlands and the United States.

One U.S. researcher involved with the project is Louis Jacobs of Southern Methodist University, or SMU, in Dallas, Texas. He told VOA that scientists knew there would be remains in the area, but “didn't know how good they would be.”

Jacobs and a team of scientists and students at SMU helped prepare the remains to be shown at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

He said visitors to the museum can see the similarity between the ancient and modern ocean environment and animals.

Michael Polcyn is another researcher at SMU. He says one ancient fish-eating animal had a long nose and teeth similar to that of a dolphin. He notes that visitors can see the remains of large, fierce animals like the mosasaur, as well as gentler creatures like an ancient **giant** sea turtle.

"We have a **snapshot** of this moment in time 72 million years ago that has **preserved** all of these animals that were living together in one place."

Scientists say a large rock from space hit the earth millions of years ago and killed most of the animals.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Julie Taboh reported this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted it for Learning English. Katy Weaver was the editor.

Words in This Story

giant – *adj.* very large

museum – *n.* a building in which interesting and valuable things such as paintings and sculptures or scientific or historical objects are collected and shown to the public

preserved – *v.* kept in its original state or in good condition

snapshot – *n.* a quick view or a small amount of information that tells you a little about what someone or something is like
