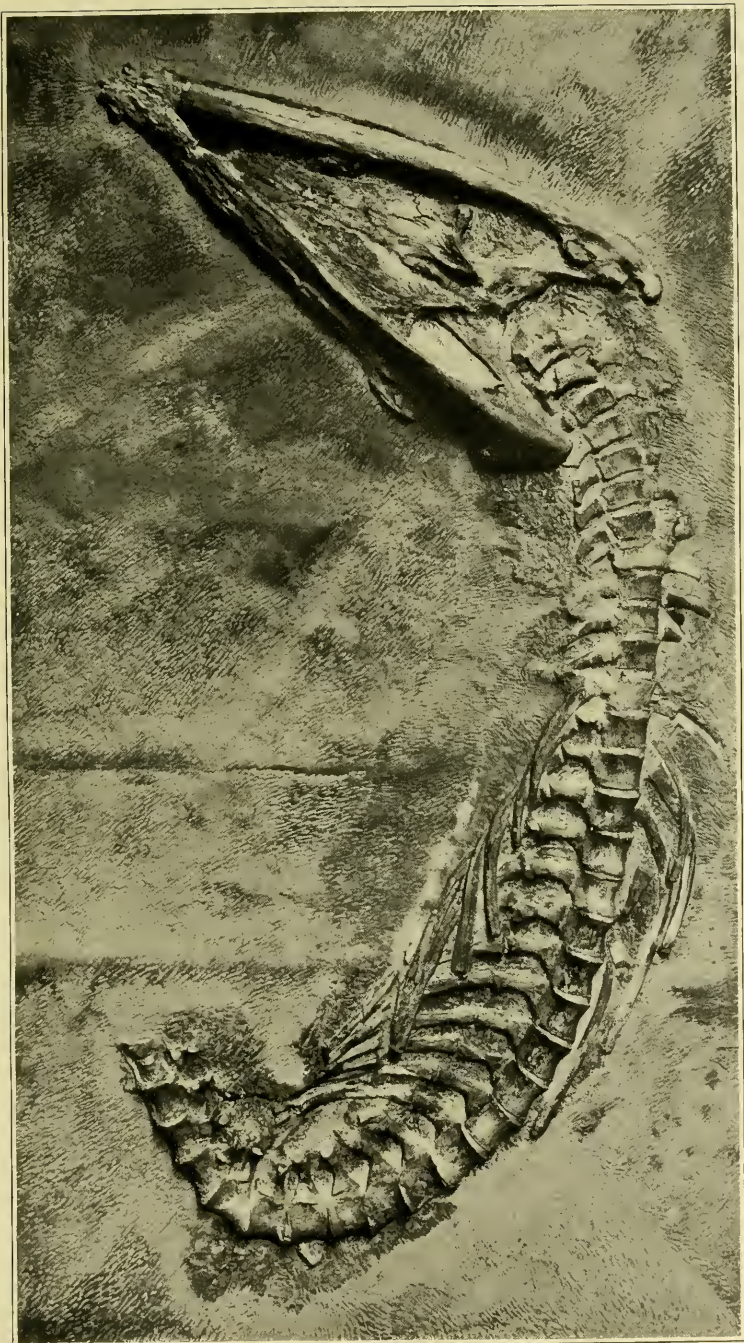


A NEW PLESIOSAUR

By FREDERIC A. LUCAS

Among the specimens included in the Marsh collection was a fine example of a plesiosaur which has recently been described by Dr. S. W. Williston¹ under the name of *Brachanchenias lucasi*. The specimen, which lies on its back, comprises the skull and jaws, with thirty-five consecutive vertebræ (plate xxviii). The upper portions of the skull and vertebræ were unfortunately weathered away before the discovery of the animal, which was found near Delphos, Ottawa county, Kansas. While the popular idea of a plesiosaur, derived from the graphic descriptions of English writers, is that of a reptile with a long, snake-like neck, yet many short-necked animals are included under that term. The present individual enjoys the distinction of being the shortest necked species yet discovered, and this, coupled with the massive head, causes the specimen to suggest a crocodile, the more that the large swimming paddles were unfortunately not preserved, having been washed away before the specimen became entombed in the deposits forming the Fort Benton limestone. Dr. Williston calls attention to the fact that while plesiosaurs are not at all uncommon in the Cretaceous deposits of North America, they are for the most part represented by detached bones, or at the best isolated, if well-preserved paddles. So while thirty-two species and fifteen genera have been described from the United States, in not a single one has any considerable portion of the skeleton been preserved, aside from those that have been described by Dr. Williston himself, and the skull is known in but three instances. As the present example shows the bones of the under side of the skull very clearly it is of special importance.

¹"North American Plesiosaurs," part 1; *Field Columbian Museum, Publication 73, Geological Series*, vol. II, No. 1; Chicago, April, 1903, p. 57.



INCOMPLETE SKELETON OF PLESIOSAUR IN THE U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM. TYPE OF BRACHANCHENIUS LUGASI WILDLISTON.