

FOSSIL
HUNTERS

SUPERCROC

Paul Sereno's Dinosaur Eater



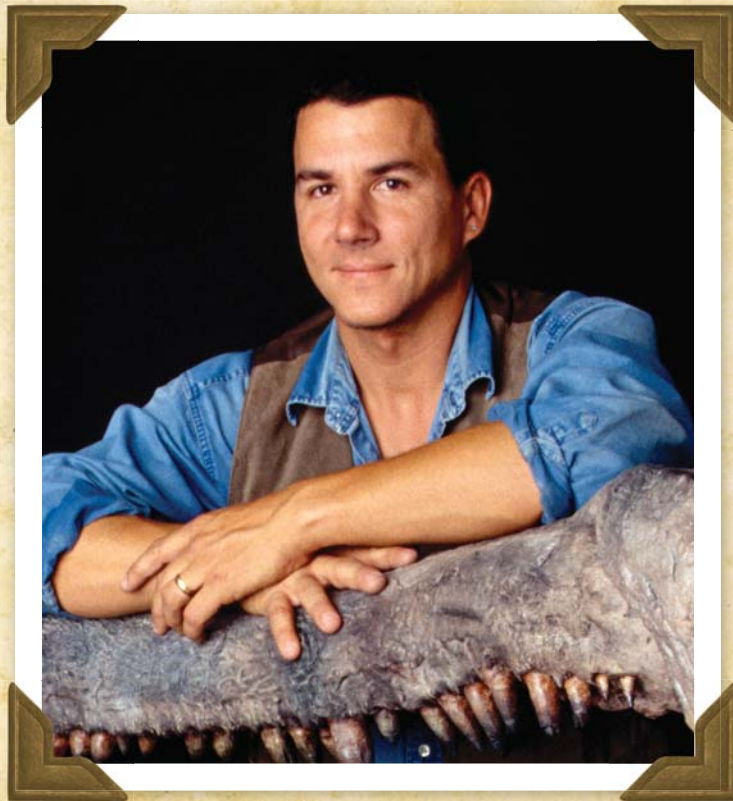
by Paul Sereno
and Natalie Lunis

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Skull in the Sand

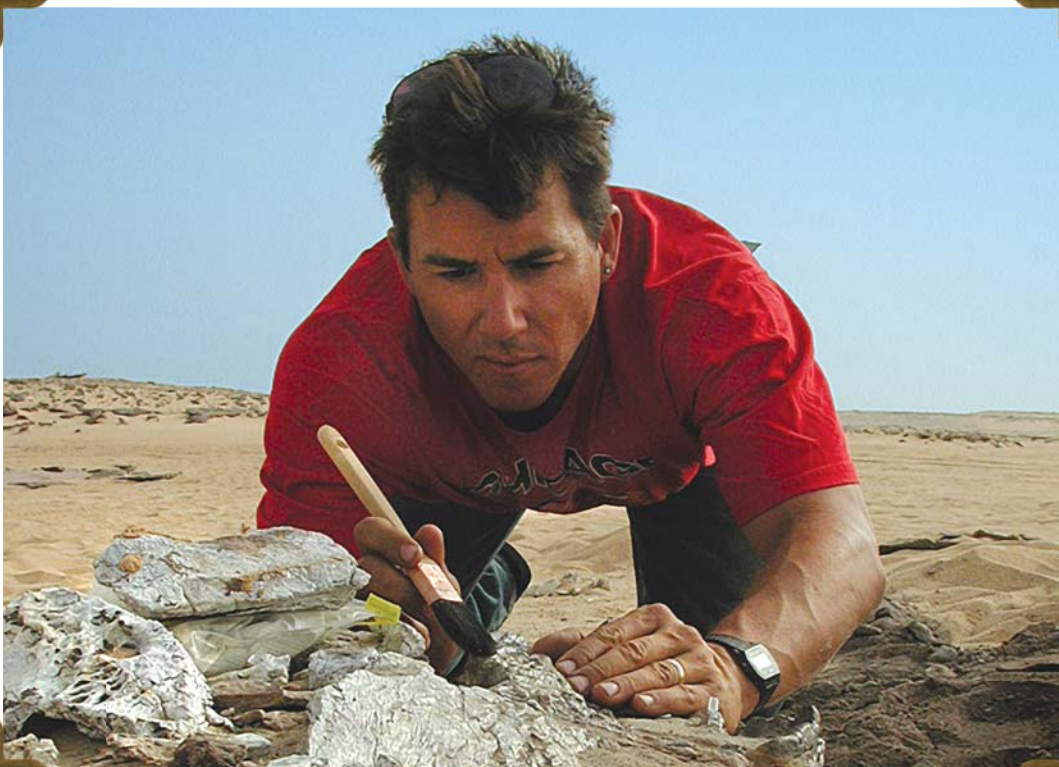
The huge skull poked out of the hot sand. Paul Sereno and his team brushed some of the sand away. They then chipped at the rock that clung to the creature's bones. Finally, they could see the whole skull.



The skull's lower jaw alone was nearly six feet (1.8 m) long.

Paul lay down and stretched out on the ground next to the giant **fossil**. They were both the same size—about six feet (1.8 m) long.

After Paul got up, the whole team looked on in awe. They had uncovered the skull of a gigantic crocodile—in the middle of the world's largest desert.



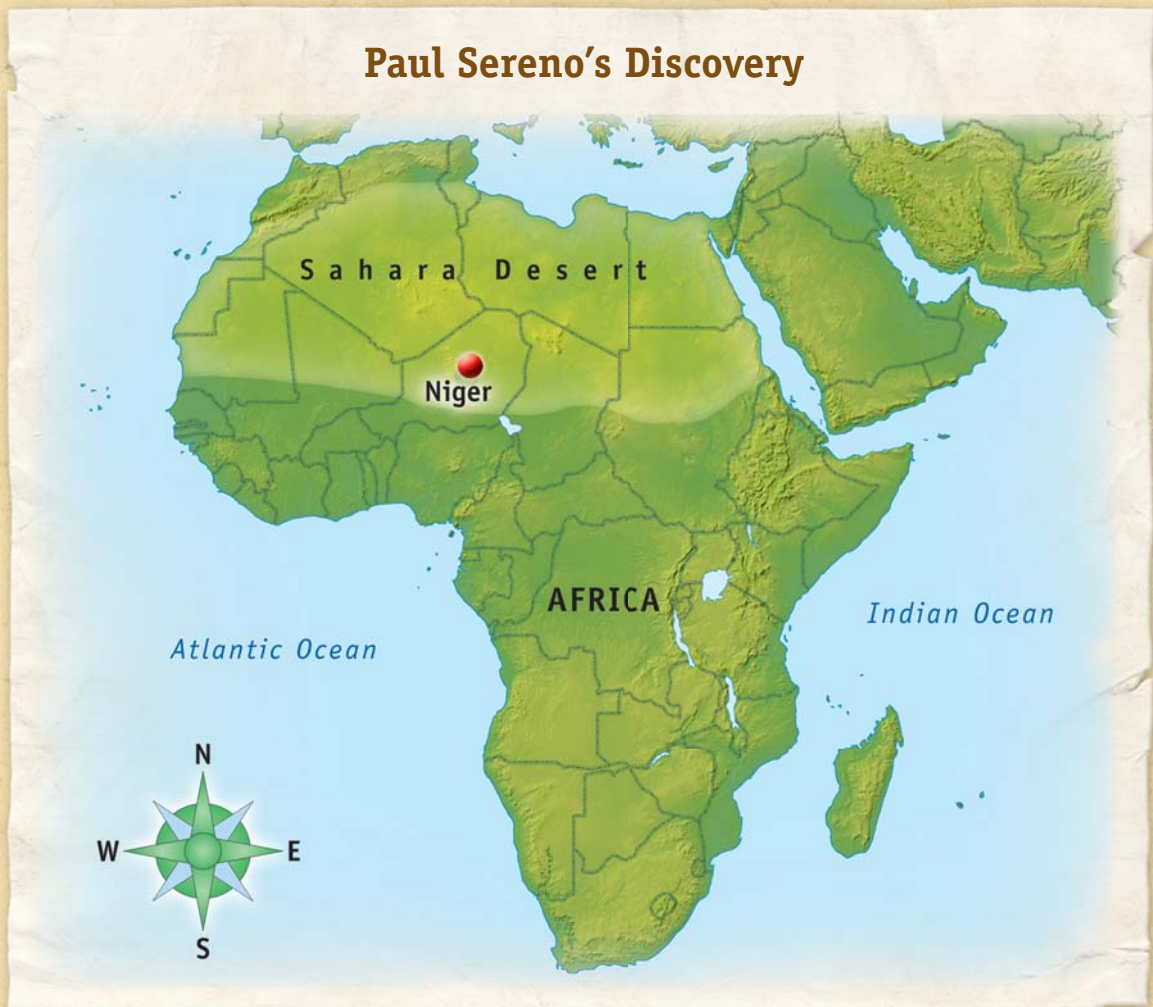
Paul brushes away sand from the huge crocodile's bones.

Crocodile skulls are stronger than the skulls of almost any other **prehistoric** animal. As a result, they are more likely to survive as fossils.

Killer in the Water

Paul Sereno is a **paleontologist**. He had come to the country of Niger (nee-ZHAIR) to search part of Africa's vast Sahara Desert. His plan was to look for dinosaur bones. Yet Paul was not shocked to find the huge skull of an **extinct** crocodile.

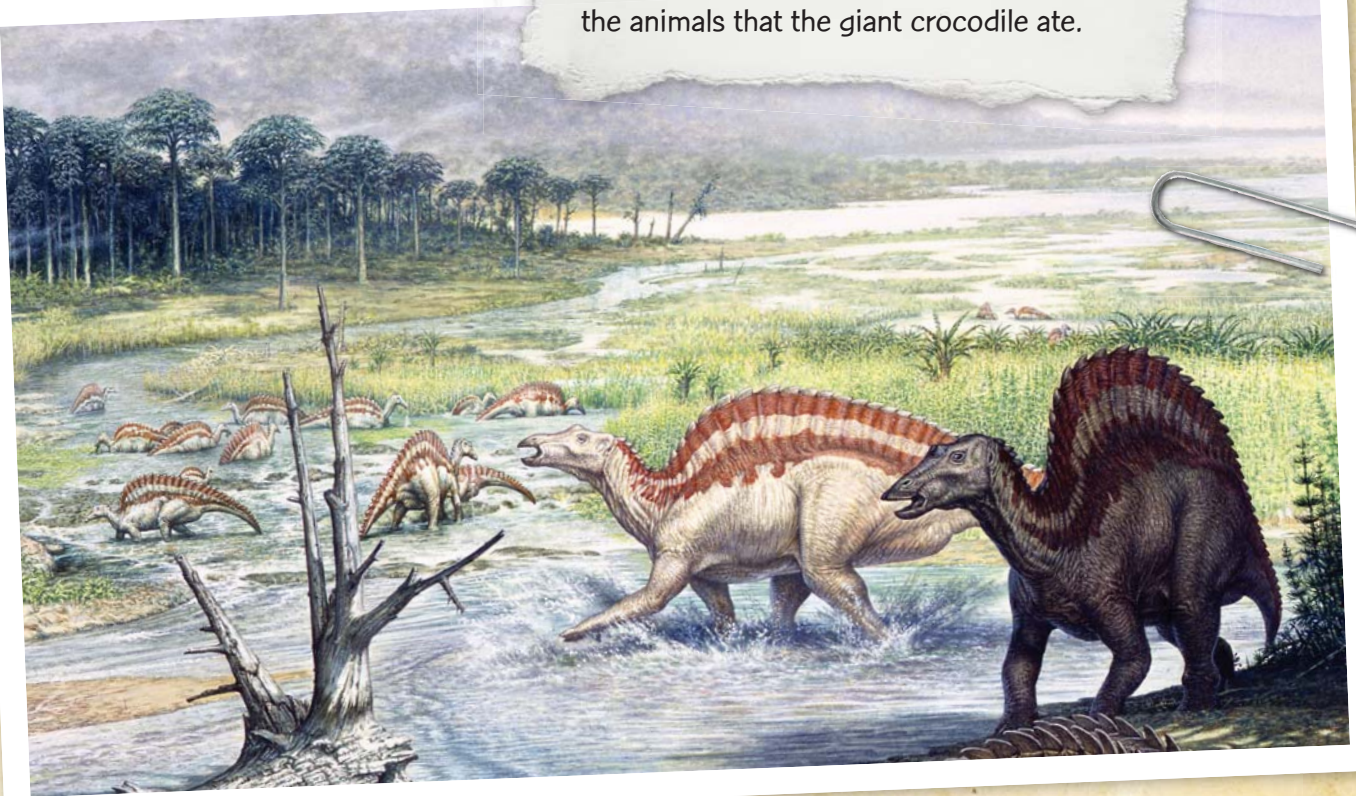
Paul Sereno's Discovery



● Where SuperCroc was found

Paul knew that the Sahara was once very different. Millions of years ago, wide rivers flowed there. Fish, turtles, and crocodiles swam in the waters. Dinosaurs came to the riverbanks to drink. Some of them never left. For Paul, the gigantic crocodile skull told the story. This crocodile ate dinosaurs.

A plant-eating dinosaur called *Ouranosaurus* (oo-ran-oh-SOR-uhss) was probably one of the animals that the giant crocodile ate.



This illustration shows what *Ouranosaurus* might have looked like.

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About the Authors

Paleontologist **Paul Sereno** grew up in a suburb of Chicago, studied art and biology as an undergraduate, trained as a paleontologist in New York, and now is a professor at the University of Chicago and cofounder of Project Exploration. Discoverer of dinosaurs on five continents and leader of dozens of expeditions, Paul began his fieldwork in Argentina, where his team discovered the early dinosaur *Eoraptor*, and continued in the Sahara, where his teams unearthed dozens of dinosaurs and crocodilians, including the 40-foot-long (12-m) SuperCroc.

Natalie Lunis has written more than two dozen science and nature books for children. She hunts for fossils at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

About Project Exploration

Project Exploration is a nonprofit science education organization that was founded by paleontologist Paul Sereno and educator Gabrielle Lyon to make the wonders of science accessible—especially to minority youth and girls. For more information, visit www.projectexploration.org.

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The huge skull poked out of the hot sand. Paul Sereno and his team chipped at the rock that clung to the creature's bones. Finally, they could see the whole skull—it belonged to a crocodile.

This wasn't just any old crocodile, however. It was gigantic. It was millions of years old. It had lived among dinosaurs. Had it eaten them, too? This was one of many questions Paul would answer as he began to learn how the giant croc really looked and lived.

The *Albertosaurus* Mystery
Philip Currie's Hunt in the Badlands

The Fossil Feud
Marsh and Cope's Bone Wars

The *Maiasaura* Nests
Jack Horner's Dinosaur Eggs

The Tiny Titanosaurs
Luis Chiappe's Dinosaur Nests

The *Oviraptor* Adventure
Mark Norell and the Egg Thief

SuperCroc
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A *T. rex* Named Sue
Sue Hendrickson's Huge Discovery

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