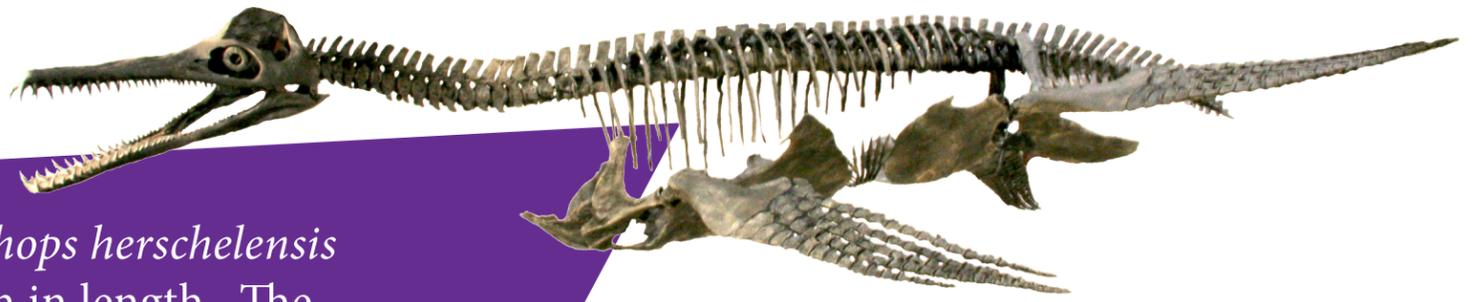


# Herschel Short-necked Plesiosaur

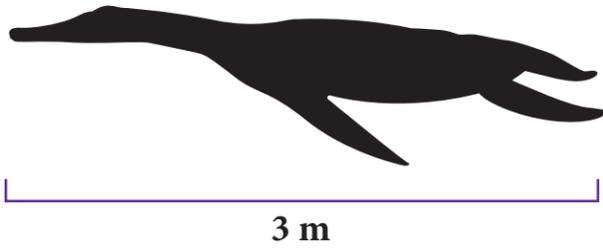
## *Dolichorhynchops herschelensis*

Name means: 'long nosed face' from Herschel.

Notable specimen from Saskatchewan: Only known specimen and Type Specimen. (A type specimen is the one specimen that is used as reference for the description of a new species)

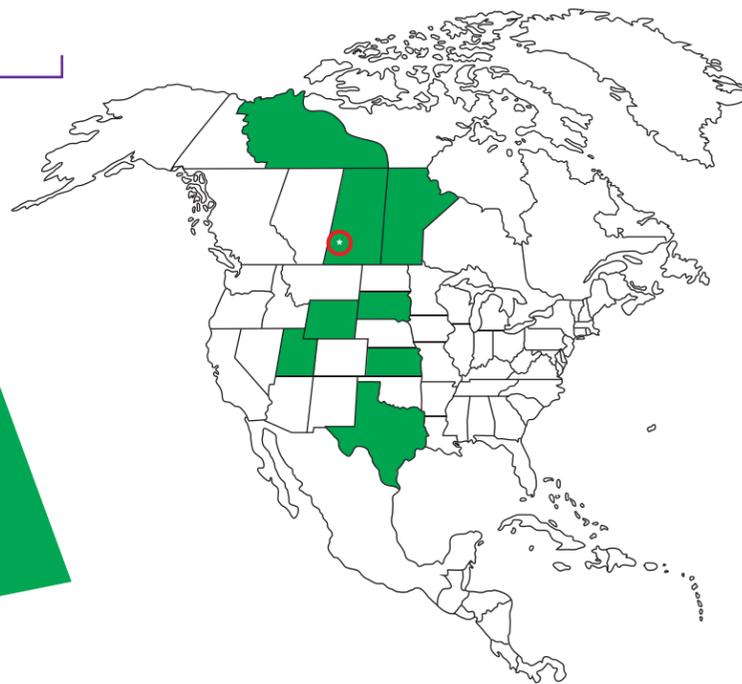


**Size:** *Dolichorhynchops herschelensis* was about 3 m in length. The specimen from Saskatchewan was a young adult.



### Age

Lived near the end of the Cretaceous Period (70 million years ago), when the last remnants of the Western Interior Seaway still covered much of Saskatchewan. The deposits that contain the Herschel plesiosaur belong to a rock unit called the Bearpaw Formation, which is found in much of southern Saskatchewan.



### Geologic Timeline

| Period  | Epoch       |
|---|-------------|
| NEOGENE (23 million years ago - Present)        | Holocene    |
|   | Pleistocene |
|   | Pliocene    |
| PALEOGENE (65 million - 23 million years ago)   | Miocene     |
|   | Oligocene   |
|   | Eocene      |
| PALEOGENE (65 million - 23 million years ago)   | Paleocene   |
|   | Late        |
| CRETACEOUS (144 million - 65 million years ago) | Early       |

### Geographic range:

*Dolichorhynchops herschelensis* is only known from the one specimen collected near Herschel, Saskatchewan. It is truly one of a kind. The genus *Dolichorhynchops*, however, is known from other specimens throughout North America.

In Saskatchewan: Other specimens of the genus *Dolichorhynchops* have been found in Saskatchewan.

### Food Preference:

The elongated snout, and very fine, cone-like teeth suggest that *Dolichorhynchops* was a fish-eater. Anything with larger or thicker bones would have broken *Dolichorhynchops*' teeth.

Plesiosaurs, have a long evolutionary history, stretching back to at least the beginning of the Jurassic Period. Like dinosaurs, plesiosaurs went extinct 65 million years ago, and no similar creature has lived on the planet since.

### Habitat:

Study of the Bearpaw Formation tells us that the Western Interior Sea was shallow and muddy around 70 million years ago. Other large predators lived in the same waters, including several species of mosasaurs (large, lizard-like swimmers) and long-necked plesiosaurs. This is also the time when the sea was inhabited with large clams, and shelled invertebrates like ammonites and baculites.

### Relations

*Dolichorhynchops* belongs to a group called short-necked plesiosaurs or polycotyliids. Polycotyliids and elasmosaurs (long-necked plesiosaurs) are closely related.

*Plesiosaurs and other marine reptiles (such as mosasaurs) are often incorrectly called dinosaurs. Although they lived during the same time period, marine reptiles were not dinosaurs.*