

Short-necked Triassic marine reptile discovered in China

December 17 2014



Holotype of *Eohupehsuchus brevicollis*, WGSC V26003. Credit: Motani et al. *PLoS ONE*.

A new species of short-necked marine reptile from the Triassic period has been discovered in China, according to a study published December 17, 2014 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Xiao-hong Chen from Wuhan Centre of China Geological Survey and colleagues.

Hupehsuchia is a group of mysterious Triassic marine reptiles which have, so far, only been found in two counties in Hubei Province, China. The group is known by its modestly long neck, with nine to ten cervical vertebrae, but the authors of this study recently discovered a new species

of *Hupehsuchia* that may show for the first time a species with a short neck (six cervical vertebrae), which they named *Eohupehsuchus brevicollis*. The left forelimb of this specimen is incomplete, ending with broken digits. Scientists suspect the breakage occurred pre-burial, possibly the result of a predator attack.

In addition to the short neck, the skull shape, with narrow forehead and parietal bones on the top of the head shifted back, are distinct and further support the need to name a new species. Analysis of related [species](#) led the researchers to believe that this [new species](#) forms the sister taxon of *Hupehsuchidae*.

More information: Chen X-h, Motani R, Cheng L, Jiang D-y Rieppel O (2014) A Small Short-Necked Hupehsuchian from the Lower Triassic of Hubei Province, China. *PLoS ONE* 9(12): e115244. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0115244](#)

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