

THE CASEBOOK

Every named sighting these two handbooks discuss, in order, with what Lee makes of it. The sea-serpent chapter moves between eight cases in forty pages and assumes you are holding all of them at once.

When and where	What was reported	What Lee makes of it
1734 • Greenland	Hans Egede's monster, seen from a mission ship.	Lee prints Bing's drawing for Pontoppidan and his own reconstruction beside it, and argues the original account is sober and the picture is not.
1817–19 • Gloucester, Massachusetts	The Gloucester serpent, seen by many witnesses over successive summers.	Cited among the well-attested sightings; Lee treats the volume of testimony as the point.
6 August 1848 • South Atlantic	H.M.S. Dædalus. Captain M'Quhae and his officers report a sixty-foot animal passing close to the ship in clear weather.	The frontispiece of the first handbook and the centre of the chapter. Lee will not explain it away and will not endorse it.
1861 • off Tenerife	The Alecton and the giant squid. Not a serpent report, but the case that changed what was thinkable.	Lee uses it to show that trained naval officers had described a cephalopod nobody believed in, twelve years before the carcasses arrived.
1875 • South Atlantic	The barque Pauline: a serpent reported coiled about a sperm whale.	The sketch reproduced here was drawn from the crew's descriptions by a naval chaplain, and Lee says so — a picture at two removes from the sighting.
1877 • Mediterranean	H.M. yacht Osborne. Officers of the royal yacht report a large animal with a ridged back.	The Graphic's picture is reproduced by the permission Lee records in his preface.
1878 • Thimble Tickle Bay, Newfoundland	A giant squid comes ashore on 2 November; among the largest ever recorded.	Not a serpent, and the reason the kraken chapter can be written at all.
1879 • Suez	The City of Baltimore.	Also from the Graphic. Lee groups it with the Osborne as the two best recent cases.

What he concludes, and does not. Lee offers four explanations for the sea-serpent reports — a line of swimming porpoises, a decayed basking shark, a great squid moving with one part raised, and, following P. H. Gosse, a surviving marine reptile — and declines to say which case is which. The last of those four has since been closed off. The rest of his list is still, essentially, the state of the question.

From Sea Monsters Unmasked, and Sea Fables Explained, Valice Classics 14. Free at valicepress.com/companion/sea-monsters-unmasked