

150–Million Year Old Baby Bird Fossil/ W Hide Scraper!

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By Steven Mopntes

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I was using my metal detector in the foothills of Tucson, Arizona. As luck would have it, I never find what I am Seeking. As the day started to come to an end. I was walking back to my truck with the metal detector resting on my shoulder.

I caught sight of an unusual looking rock laying on the ground. After picking up the rock I dusted the rock on my pant leg and noticed a fossilized baby bird just off center of the stone. I turned the stone over to reveal more of the bird's body on the back of the stone.

After showing the bird off to some of my friends, I decided to take the stone to the University of Arizona. I wanted to learn more about what I had found.

My first stop at the U of A was at the American History Museum. I was told to take my stone to the Paleontology Department across the lawn in front of where I was. When I got there I saw a professor in his office. I asked him if I could talk to a Paleontologist. He asked why, so I handed him the stone and preceded to tell him how I had found the stone. His eyes got big with excitement as he examined the stone while we walking down the hallway to another office. Soon theirs were several professor and people looking at the stone in awe over my good fortune. As they talked, I listened.

The rock I found was secondary sedimentary solidified black limestone. Which is not indigenous to this area. I was told the rock could have come from Canada, Montana, Kansas, China, or even from South America.

The baby bird fossil was 150 million years old. This period in time is when birds evolved from reptiles. Another professor pointed out to me other inclusions that were in the stone like plant matter, twigs, and other foreign objects not identifiable to him. A professor stated that there was proof that this rock was found on the top of the ground the impact marks etched into the rock as the rain hit the front of the stone for thousands of years while it lay on top of the ground. The marks were small circular pockets about the size of a pencil eraser grouped together. It was also mentioned that there was once other bones near the chest of the bird that had fallen out over time but the imprint of the bones are still visible. They could not identify the species of bird, as there is nothing on record, to compare it to.

I was asked by one of the professors if I wouldn't mind waiting for one more professor who was still in class to come see the stone. He stated that this professor was part of their group and they wanted his

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opinion of the stone.

As he approached, I handed him, the stone. He looked at it for a moment and stated that this stone was an artifact that had been carved by primitive man into a tool used to scrape the flesh away from the hide of game killed for food. It turned out that this mans background is in the field of Archeology. A silence fell on the people gathered we listened to information being given about this rare find.

The archeologist asked one of the professors if he could borrow his microscope to look at the stone more in depth. The group moved down the hall to a small office where we entered. As I stood by his side, he examined the stone and stated that there were glassy areas on the sharp edge around the stone that were not visible to the naked eye. He said that the tendons and ligaments had polished parts of the stone while being used. He also stated that the hide scraper was in mint condition and had hardly been used. He went on to say that most hide scrappers that we see today in museums are small ovals that are badly worn due to their use, and then discarded when they become too small and

useless. He also said that he had never seen a slightly used hide scraper before.

He made mention that he wished he knew what group of people had carved the hide scraper. He thought that person who carved the stone might possibly be the first person to be recorded or documented as the first person to be a collector of fossils. He also said that these primitive people were farmers, artists, traders much like the people of today.

He also stated that the position of the bird and the way it was hand carved into a tool to portrayed the bird in such a manner that this item would be considered true fossil art.

After things started to wind down, I felt as several people like me, were in every sense of the word in awe over what this man had to share with us. One of the questions I asked was how much was this unique item I had found worth? The answer was that this artifact with a fossil inside of it had never been seen, documented or recorded anywhere in the world. So because there was nothing to compare it to, this item would be considered priceless.

As people were leaving, a young lady, still full of excitement, that if she was me, I should take a picture of the hide scraper and put it on the internet, and said that I should put a price of 20 million dollars, being that there is only one of these unique hide scrapers in the world. The chances of finding anything like it again are probably one in a trillion.

To date I am the only one in the world that has found anything like this ever. Owning this rare Jewel is overwhelming and too great for any one person to own, so I would like to share my enthusiasm with you and your friends.

If you need more information or pictures about this topic, please call me at area code: 520–749–1105 or e–mail Smontes@scientist.com and ask for Steve at Montes.

I am a Silver smith. I am one of only a few people that makes Tin Can Luminaries, with the same torch I use for making jewelry I make fine intricate cuts into the can, and when you light the votive inside the can, every time the flame flickers it moves the patterns placed into the can all around to create a romantic setting. I also created a night light made from a can of tuna. Which shines a large star on your wall when lite. I was

Fossil Watches for Fans

By Ratliff J

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If you have a favorite movie, show, or even college sports team, Fossil may have a watch for you. Living in Texas, my favorite is of course their Texas Longhorn collegiate watch. Fossil watches are very nice to wear, and will not cost you a bundle. Most of my favorites run from \$65 to \$85, well within most people's budget for a quality watch. You can learn more about Fossil Watches at

J. Ratliff has a website devoted to fossil watches at



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