

## **A NEW ELASMOSAURID PLESIOSAUR (REPTILIA: SAUROPTERYGIA) FROM THE LOWER CRETACEOUS CLEARWATER FORMATION, NORTHEASTERN ALBERTA, CANADA**

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### ABSTRACT

A new taxon of elasmosaurid plesiosaur from northern Alberta, *Wapuskanectes betsynichollsae* gen. et sp. nov., is described. The specimen was recovered from the Lower Cretaceous Wabiskaw Member of the Clearwater Formation, and is recognized as the oldest elasmosaurid described from the Cretaceous of North America. The holotype specimen, TMP 98.49.02, includes a very well preserved pectoral girdle, and provides many taxonomically informative characters for comparison to other Cretaceous long-necked taxa, including the Aptian taxon *Callawayasaurus colombiensis* (Welles, 1962). Bearing possible ontogenetic variation in mind, *Wapuskanectes* is distinguished from other adult plesiosaurs by the presence of a complete pectoral bar, the absence of a broad medial contact between the ventral rami of the scapulae, a very pronounced ventral process of the coracoids, a fully enclosed cordiform intercoracoid vacuity, and a distinct postaxial epipodial facet on the humerus.