

IF I COULD TALK TO THE PLESIOSAURS

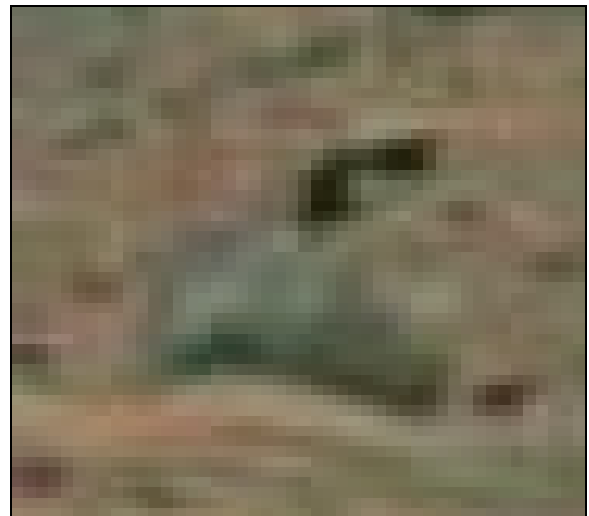
Question asked of MARS: A year after first discovering life on Mars, I have to ask you: What is your favorite animal on the Red Planet?



Andrew D. Basiago, president, Mars Anomaly Research Society (MARS): I would have to say the plesiosaur. I have felt close to this creature ever since one of them chased me with a view to fetching lunch during my second trip to Mars, which took place in August 1981 from a “jump room” at a CIA facility in El Segundo, CA. On Earth, the plesiosaur was an aquatic reptile with a bulky body like a turtle and a long neck like a snake that did not survive the K-T extinction. Despite its supposed disappearance, the plesiosaur has been posited as the possible identity of the lake monsters said to inhabit Loch Ness, Lake Champlain, and Lake Okanagan – “Nessie,” “Champ,” and “Ogopogo.” I am calling these land animals on Mars “plesiosaurs” because of their similarity to the *plesiosaurus* species that once inhabited the waters of Earth. I am especially fond of this creature because their movements have helped MARS establish that some of the life forms we have been finding on Mars are not statues and therefore that Mars harbors life. In NASA image PIA10214, which was the focus of my paper *The Discovery of Life on Mars* (2008), we find plesiosaurs with their shells shining in the sunlight (*top*), turning their necks (*middle*), and leaping from earthen embankments (*bottom*). Statues don’t do that. I am so fond of this Martian animal that I chose one for the logo of MARS, which supports my contention that Mars is an inhabited planet.



Plesiosaur with shell shining in sunlight



Plesiosaur turning its head to the right



Plesiosaur leaping from embankment