

Sahara was most dangerous place in Earth's history

1st May, 2020



A team of paleontologists has uncovered what they believe was the most dangerous place in the history of the Earth. It is not a crime-ridden, inner-city ghetto or a hellish war zone. It was an area of the Sahara

Desert in Morocco that 100 million years ago was a scary place to be. The team of fossil hunters said an area near the Morocco-Algeria border was home to a terrifying array of ferocious predators - rather like the beasts from Jurassic Park, but on steroids. The paleontologists have dubbed the area as being the "most dangerous place in the history of planet Earth". Their claim is based on the discovery of an array of fossils found in ancient rock formations called the Kem Kem group deep in the Sahara.

Professor David Martill wrote about the significance of the study. He said: "This is the most comprehensive piece of work on fossil vertebrates from the Sahara in almost a century." He added: "This place was filled with absolutely enormous fish...probably four or even five times large than today's....There was an enormous freshwater saw shark...with the most fearsome of teeth. They are like barbed daggers, but beautifully shiny." Dr Nizar Ibrahim, lead author of the report into the research, said it was a truly inhospitable habitat. He said it was, "a place where a human time-traveller would not last very long". He said the study provides "a window into Africa's age of dinosaurs".

Sources: newsweek.com / sciencealert.com / sci-news.com

Writing

Life on Earth in the past was more dangerous than it is now. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

paleontologists / dangerous / history / inner city / war zone / fossil / terrifying / study / vertebrates / century / enormous fish / shark / teeth / inhospitable / habitat

True / False

- The most dangerous place on earth is a war zone in the Sahara. T / F
- The most dangerous place was found to be 100 million years ago. T / F
- The dinosaurs they found fossils of were in the movie Jurassic Park. T / F
- The fossils they found were in an area called Kem Kem. T / F
- The research is the most comprehensive ever done on fossils. T / F
- The area in the study was full of huge fish 100 million years ago. T / F
- The article described a whale with very sharp teeth. T / F
- A researcher said the place was a great place for time-travellers. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| 1. uncovered | a. importance |
| 2. area | b. named |
| 3. array | c. era |
| 4. dubbed | d. collection |
| 5. ancient | e. thorough |
| 6. significance | f. found |
| 7. comprehensive | g. hostile |
| 8. enormous | h. very old |
| 9. inhospitable | i. huge |
| 10. age | j. region |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think is the most dangerous place on Earth?
- How dangerous is your town?
- What's the most dangerous place you've been to?
- What do you think of paleontology?
- What do you think of fossils?
- How important is it to find fossils?
- What are the most terrifying beasts in the world today?
- What do you know about the Sahara Desert?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. a crime-ridden, inner- | a. fish |
| 2. an area near the Morocco- | b. in the Sahara |
| 3. ferocious | c. predators |
| 4. the discovery of an | d. traveller |
| 5. deep | e. city ghetto |
| 6. the most comprehensive piece of | f. of dinosaurs |
| 7. filled with absolutely enormous | g. habitat |
| 8. it was a truly inhospitable | h. array of fossils |
| 9. a human time- | i. work |
| 10. a window into Africa's age | j. Algeria border |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What is the most dangerous time in history?
- How dangerous is the world today?
- Would you like to be a paleontologist?
- Do you think scientists should use DNA to bring dinosaurs back?
- If you were a time-traveller, what time would you go to?
- What would you like to know about the age of the dinosaurs?
- What questions would you like to ask the paleontologists?

Spelling

- crime-ridden, inner-city thteog
- The team of iossilf hunters
- seroifouc predators
- from Jurassic Park, but on ietdsosr
- based on the discovery of an yarar
- entainc rock formations
- the ginasfcenici of the study
- pemsrheniveco piece of work
- absolutely ouosrnme fish
- the most easeofrm of teeth
- a truly atbploshieni habitat
- Africa's age of diorsnuas

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. j	3. d	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. e	8. i	9. g	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Sharks

You think sharks are the most ferocious animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't as ferocious. Also, tell the others which are the cutest of these (and why): bears, snakes or hornets.

Role B – Bears

You think bears are the most ferocious animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't as ferocious. Also, tell the others which are the cutest of these (and why): sharks, snakes or hornets.

Role C – Snakes

You think snakes are the most ferocious animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't as ferocious. Also, tell the others which are the cutest of these (and why): bears, sharks or hornets.

Role D – Hornets

You think hornets are the most ferocious animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their animals aren't as ferocious. Also, tell the others which are the cutest of these (and why): bears, snakes or sharks.

Speaking – Ferocious

Rank these with your partner. Put the most ferocious animals at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------|----------------|
| • shark | • hornet |
| • hyena | • centipede |
| • rat | • bear |
| • lion | • rattle snake |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.