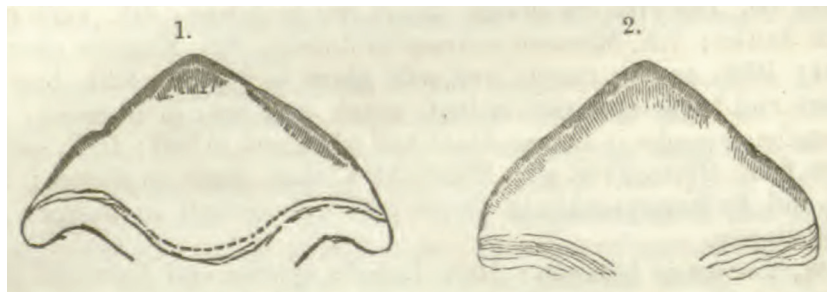




## HIGH-QUALITY CASTS OF THE MISSING HOLOTYPE OF *PETALODUS OHIOENSIS* SAFFORD 1853 (CHONDRICHTHYES, PETALODONTIDAE) AT THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND THEIR BEARING ON THE VALIDITY AND PRIORITY OF THE SPECIES

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# GEOLOGY OF THE INTERMOUNTAIN WEST

an open-access journal of the Utah Geological Association

ISSN 2380-7601

Volume 7

2020

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Top: Drawings of (1) the labial (outer) and (2) the lingual (inner) faces of the currently missing holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853. From the original description. Middle: (A) labial and (B) lingual views of a cast of the holotype of *P. ohioensis* from the collections of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. Scale bar = 1 cm. Bottom: Three casts of the holotype of *P. ohioensis*. Left to right: cast of labial side, three-dimensional cast, cast of lingual side. From the collections of the Field Museum of Natural History.



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## High-quality Casts of the Missing Holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853 (Chondrichthyes, Petalodontidae) at the Field Museum of Natural History and their Bearing on the Validity and Priority of the Species

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### ABSTRACT

The validity of the chondrichthyan species *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853, has long been in doubt due to the poor quality of the published figures and the unknown whereabouts of the holotype. That situation changed with the discovery of casts of the holotype in the collections of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. The quality of the casts is poor, but sufficient to establish *P. ohioensis* as a valid species and as a senior synonym of *P. alleghaniensis* Leidy 1856. Recently, casts of the holotype of much better quality were found in the collections of the Field Museum of Natural History, accompanied by documentation indicating that they were likely obtained directly from Safford by O.P. Hay in 1896. The Field Museum casts clearly show the bands of ridges at the base of the crown on the labial and lingual sides, which are not visible on the Yale Peabody Museum casts.

### INTRODUCTION

The holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853, is a tooth from the Cambridge Limestone Member of the Glenshaw Formation of the Conemaugh Group, Guernsey County, Ohio. *Petalodus* is an extinct genus of cartilaginous fishes related to sharks and the Cambridge Limestone is Upper Pennsylvanian (Missourian) in age (Martino, 2004). Safford (1853) published rough drawings of the holotype (figure 1) and a brief description in a short note. That note seems to have been unnoticed by other researchers for decades. During that period of neglect, *P. alleghaniensis* Leidy 1856 and *P. destructor* Newberry and Worthen 1866 were described, based

on teeth very similar to the holotype of *P. ohioensis*. In the description of yet another species of *Petalodus*, *P. securiger*, Hay (1895) noted Safford's description of *P. ohioensis* and raised the possibility that some or all of the later-described species, *P. alleghaniensis*, *P. destructor*, and *P. securiger*, might be junior synonyms of *P. ohioensis*. However, Hay (1895) hesitated to formally synonymize these species with *P. ohioensis*, in part because Hay questioned the accuracy of Safford's figures. Hay (1895, p. 563) remarked that "It would be interesting to know whether or not the type of Professor Safford's specimen is yet in existence." Hay later reconsidered the status of *P. ohioensis*, since *P. alleghaniensis*, *P. destructor*, and *P. securiger* (as *P. securis*) are all listed as

Citation for this article.

Itano, W.M., and Carpenter, K., 2020, High-quality casts of the missing holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853 (Chondrichthyes, Petalodontidae) at the Field Museum of Natural History and their bearing on the validity and priority of the species: *Geology of the Intermountain West*, v. 7, p. 197–203, <https://doi.org/10.31711/giw.v7.pp197-203>.

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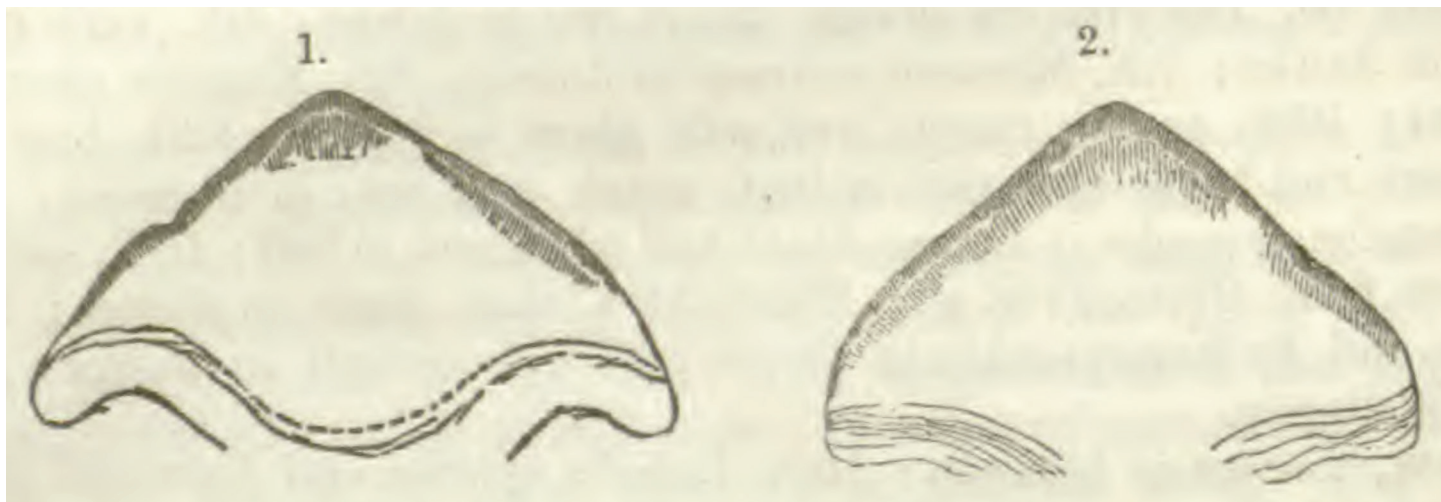


Figure 1. *Petalodus ohioensis* from Safford (1853, p. 142) in (1) labial and (2) lingual views.

junior synonyms of *P. ohioensis* in the bibliography of fossil vertebrates of North America (Hay, 1902).

Whereas some researchers (Hansen, 1985, 1996; Dalla Vecchia, 1988; Ramovš, 1997a, 1997b; Lucas and Estep, 2000; Robb, 2003; Elliott and others, 2004; Hamm and Cicimurri, 2005; Brusatte, 2007; Ginter and others, 2010; Carpenter and Ottinger, 2018) have followed Hay in regarding *P. ohioensis* as the senior synonym, others (Miller, 1957; Miller and Mann, 1958; McNulty, 1963; Zidek, 1976; Goto and Okura, 2004; Monson, 2010) have followed Eastman (1896) in giving priority to the name *P. alleghaniensis*, apparently regarding *P. ohioensis* to be a nomen dubium, due to the inadequacy of Safford's description. The status of *Petalodus ohioensis* is difficult to resolve without having access to its holotype or even to an accurate illustration of it.

## INSTITUTIONAL ABBREVIATIONS

FMNH = Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois; YPM = Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

## CASTS AT THE YALE PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Recently, the present authors located two casts at the Yale Peabody Museum, accompanied by a label stating

that they were copies of the holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* and that they were received from the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (Carpenter and Itano, 2019). Figure 2 shows labial (A) and lingual (B) views of one of the casts. There seems to be no reason to doubt the authenticity of the casts, which correspond closely to the drawings of Safford (1853) (figure 1), even to the slight asymmetries of the crown margins. The casts were catalogued at the Yale Peabody Museum on September 18, 1930, but might have been received at an earlier date (D. Brinkman, Yale Peabody Museum, email communication, June 15, 2018). Currently, neither the holotype of *P. ohioensis* nor casts of it, nor any record of them, can be located at the Museum of Comparative Zoology (J. Cundiff, Museum of Comparative Zoology, email communication, June 15, 2018). Despite their low quality, the casts at the Yale Peabody Museum are sufficiently detailed to establish the validity of *P. ohioensis*. They confirm that *P. alleghaniensis* is a junior synonym of *Petalodus ohioensis* (Carpenter and Itano, 2019).

It seems possible, even likely, that Safford would have sent a cast of the holotype to L. Agassiz, then at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, whom Safford (1853) credits with identifying the genus of the tooth. The poor quality of the Yale Peabody Museum casts might be a result of their being copies of a cast, once



Figure 2. Cast of the holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* in (A) labial and (B) lingual views. Specimen number YPM PV 2861 from the collections of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. Scale bar = 1 cm.

held by the Museum of Comparative Zoology, rather than being copies of the original specimen.

### CASTS AT THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Recently, one of the authors (Itano) noticed the following entry in a catalogue of type specimens in the Field Museum of Natural History (Bruner, 1992):

*Petalodus ohioensis* (Safford, 1851)  
= Originally described as *Getalodus ohioensis* Safford 1851  
PF 673 Casts of holotype. Casts of 3 teeth.  
Pennsylvanian.  
Ohio: Guernsey County: Near Cambridge.  
Collector: J. M. Safford.  
Safford, J. M. 1853. Tooth of *Getalodus ohioensis*.  
*American Journal of Science*, 2nd ser., 16: 142. Desc. (p. 142) & fig. Figs. 1, 2.

The description leaves no doubt that the tooth referred to is the holotype of *P. ohioensis*. The date 1851 should be corrected to 1853, the date of Safford's publication. One of the authors (Itano) requested information from the Field Museum as to the status of the casts and received a photograph (figure 3) and registration information (figure 4) (W. Simpson, Field Museum of Natural History, email communication, January 21,

2020). Simpson also clarified that, although the entry in Bruner (1992) refers to “casts of 3 teeth,” there are actually three casts of the same tooth: one of the entire tooth and one each of only the labial or lingual side. The Field Museum casts are of better quality than those of the Yale Peabody Museum and reinforce the conclusions of Carpenter and Itano (2019) as to the validity and priority of *Petalodus ohioensis*. That the Field Museum and Yale Peabody Museum casts are of the same tooth is clear by observation. The close correspondence of the asymmetric lingual faces (rightmost cast of figure 3 versus figure 2B) is particularly striking. The Field Museum casts are important because they clearly show the bands of ridges at the base of the crown on the labial and lingual sides. The Yale Peabody Museum casts are too rough to show the ridges, which are a feature of all *Petalodus* teeth (Hansen, 1985). Bands of ridges on both labial and lingual sides distinguish *Petalodus* from similar genera, for example, *Polyrhizodus*, which has ridges only on the lingual side (Hansen, 1985).

The handwritten note in figure 3, with the words, “Casts of *Petalodus ohioensis*, J. M. Safford, Nashville, Tenn., Presented by O. P. Hay,” together with the information from the registration record (figure 4) that the casts were received in 1896 from O.P. Hay, allows one to reconstruct a plausible series of events. James Merrill Safford was a professor at Cumberland University,



Figure 3. Three casts of the holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis*. Specimen number FMNH PF 673. From left to right: cast of labial side, three-dimensional cast, cast of lingual side. Photograph by W. Simpson (Field Museum of Natural History). Used with permission.

Lebanon, Tennessee, from 1848 to 1873. From 1873 to 1900, Safford was a professor at the University of Nashville and at Vanderbilt University, both in Nashville, Tennessee (Stearns, 2018). One can speculate that, after writing the 1895 article, Hay wrote to Safford, who was then in Nashville, enquiring as to the status of the holotype of *P. ohioensis*, received the casts shown in figure 3, and, in 1896, donated them to the Field Museum of Natural History, which was then called the Field Columbian Museum. Based on the evidence of the casts,

Hay might then have concluded that *P. ohioensis* was the senior synonym of *P. alleghaniensis*, *P. destructor*, and *P. securiger*, as is reflected in Hay (1902). Attempts by the present authors to locate the original holotype have so far been unsuccessful.

## CONCLUSIONS

The casts of the holotype of *Petalodus ohioensis* Safford 1853, FMNH PF 673, in the collections of the Field Museum of Natural History, show details not present on

1 of 1 Axiell EMU IRN: 2408107 Primary Key: PF673 Next Available No: 17546 MASTERFILE INPUT SCREEN VP Coll F

Synonyms

Higher Taxon 3 Chondrichthyes  
Higher Taxon 2 Holocephali  
Higher Taxon 1 [Holocephali]  
Superorder Paraselachimorpha  
Order Petalodontiformes  
Suborder [Petalodontiformes]  
Infraorder [Petalodontiformes]  
Family Petalodontidae  
Subfamily [Petalodontidae]

CANCEL  
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jf sharks  
Desc. and fig'd by J.M. Safford, 1853: Am. Journ. Sci., (2), 16, p 142, fig. 1-2

Catalogue No: PF 673  
Genus Petalodus  
specific epithet ohioensis  
Author / Year Safford 1853  
Morphology casts of 3 teeth  
entry date 2/14/1952 # of individuals 1 pieces 3  
Period Pennsylvanian Epoch  
Age  
Group  
Formation  
Member  
Horizon  
Coal measures  
Continent North America State County  
Country USA Ohio Guernsey County  
Location near Cambridge  
Locality Name  
Township + range  
Quad Map  
Lat/Long UTM Co-ords  
Centroid Coords Elevation:  
Remarks  
Collector J.M. Safford  
Field # MADsub# MADconcat  
Date Collected 0 Year modifier corcat 0  
Old Cat # (entry fields) P 5307 P 5307  
Accession# G-310 Acc Date Other Inst#  
Accession Description Gift, 1896, from O.P. Hay  
Remarks

Figure 4. Registration information for FMNH PF 673. Courtesy of W. Simpson (Field Museum of Natural History). Used with permission.

the casts in the collections of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, YPM PV 2861. This reinforces the conclusions of the present authors (Carpenter and Itano, 2019) that *P. ohioensis* is a valid species and a senior synonym of *P. alleghaniensis*.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank William Simpson (Field Museum of Natural History) for the photograph of the casts (figure 3) and the registration information (figure 4). We thank

Dan Brinkman (Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, Connecticut) for access to collections and for information on the casts registered as YPM PV 2861. We thank Jessica Cundiff (Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts) for attempting to locate the holotype of *P. ohioensis*, or casts of it, in the museum collections. We thank James Kirkland (Utah Geological Survey) and Spencer Lucas (New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science) for their constructive reviews.

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