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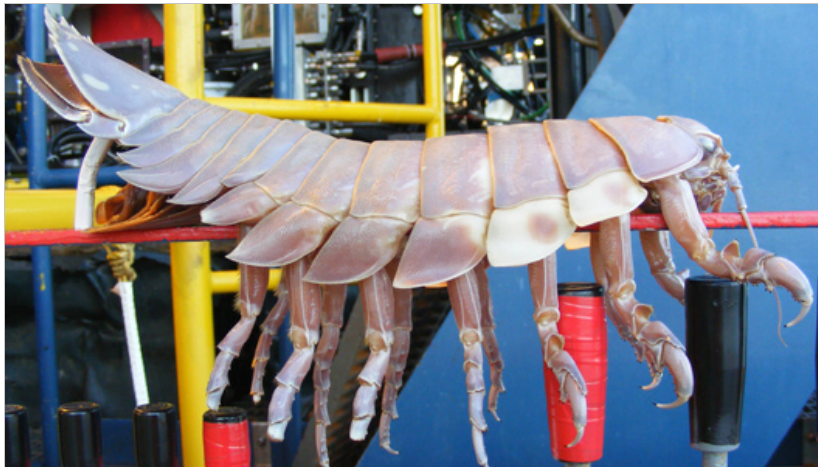
# Giant, deep-sea bug surfaces in Gulf of Mexico

Huge isopod hauled from the ocean darkness after it attached itself to a remote-controlled submarine at around 8,500 feet.

By Jeffrey Davis

6

Fri, Apr 02 2010 at 11:56 AM EST



MONSTER FROM THE DEEP: A 30-inch long isopod. (Photo: Gwynzer/Reddit)

The ocean depths are the last great frontier to explore on planet Earth. [Yahoo! Buzz illustrates](#) just how creepy the pitch-black depths can actually be. Case in point: A 30-inch deep-sea isopod that surfaced this week.

MSNBC [says this of the scary-looking bug](#), "It may look like a creepy-crawly April

Fool's joke — but an expert on deep-sea species says the bizarre giant bug shown in pictures circulating on the Internet is the real deal."

"I've seen the pictures, and they are real, and they really do get that big," said Craig McClain, assistant director of science for the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center in North Carolina, told MSNBC.

Pictures of the bug appeared on [Reddit](#) earlier this week when the creature was hauled to the surface after reportedly attaching itself to a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) near an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

Scary as the giant bug appears, scientists have been aware of them for quite some time. The official name of this species is *Bathynomus giganteus*, and they are commonly found in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, usually around 8,500 feet.

McClain told MSNBC, "It's definitely not an April Fools' joke."

The *Bathynomus giganteus* may be an imposing giant, but it's very similar to more

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commonly encountered isopods, such as rolypolys or pillbugs.

*B. giganteus* lives on the sea floor and is an important scavenger in the deep-sea environment. The bugs are mostly carnivorous and feed on dead whales, fish and squid. Check out the video below of crabs, eels and giant isopods fighting for the rights to a tuna carcass.

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