

Meg 2: The Trench

Meg 2: The Trench (titled Shark 2 in some territories) is a 2023 science fiction action film directed by Ben Wheatley and a sequel to The Meg (2018), based on the 1999 novel The Trench by Steve Alten. Jon Hoeber, Erich Hoeber, and Dean Georgaris all return as writers from the first film, with Jason Statham, Sophia Cai, Page Kennedy, and Cliff Curtis reprising their roles alongside Wu Jing, Sergio Peris-Mencheta, and Skyler Samuels. Like the previous film, it follows a group of scientists who must outrun and outswim the megalodons when a malevolent mining operation threatens their mission and forces them into a high-stakes battle for survival.

Plans for the sequel were announced to be in early development in October 2018 after the box office success of the first film. Principal photography began in February 2022 and lasted until May, occurring in various locations in Asia and Warner Bros. Studios, Leavesden, in Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

Meg 2: The Trench had its premiere at the Shanghai International Film Festival on June 9, 2023, and was released in the United States on August 4, by Warner Bros. Pictures. The film received mixed reviews and was a box office success, grossing \$397.7 million worldwide.

Plot

Five years after the events of the first film, Jonas Taylor has been involved in fighting environmental crimes while helping Mana One explore the Mariana Trench, where the Megalodon had been found. Following the death of Jonas' wife Suyin Zhang, he has been raising her teenage daughter Meiying alongside her uncle and Suyin's brother Jiuming Zhang. Jiuming acquired his father's company alongside wealthy financier Hillary Driscoll. Mana One has been studying an 80 ft (24 m) female Meg called Haiqi, who was discovered as a pup and trained by Jiuming in a reserve in Hainan.

Jonas and Jiuming lead a routine submersible exploration to the Trench. Fellow Meg survivors DJ and Mac observe them from the Mana One. The subs are pursued by Haiqi, who has escaped captivity; the subs dive through the thermocline to escape, where they encounter two much larger Megs, a massive alpha male and a beta male, who mate with Haiqi. Jiuming realizes that Haiqi had

Meg 2: The Trench



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Ben Wheatley
Screenplay by	Jon Hoeber Erich Hoeber Dean Georgaris
Story by	Dean Georgaris Jon Hoeber Erich Hoeber
Based on	The Trench by Steve Alten
Produced by	Lorenzo di Bonaventura Belle Avery
Starring	Jason Statham Wu Jing Sophia Cai Page Kennedy Sergio Peris-Mencheta

been acting strange because it is mating season; she was calling the other Megs to mate. The team also discovers an illegal mining operation captained by mercenary Montes, who has a vendetta against Jonas for his imprisonment some time before. Montes' crew was hired by the secretly corrupt Driscoll to use the Mana One's access to the Trench to farm rare-earth minerals that could earn them billions. Montes kills his crew in an explosion to cover up their activities, which causes a rupture in the Trench and grounds the team's ships.

DJ, Mac, and Mana One analyst Jess discover that the rescue pod has been sabotaged, forcing the crew to use exosuits to walk toward Montes' station, with only four of them surviving the journey. Jess reveals herself as a traitor and attempts to remotely kill the four, but they escape in a submersible. As the crew surfaces, they discover that the rupture from earlier has caused several Trench creatures, including the three Megs, lizard-like creatures known as Snappers and a giant octopus to escape to the surface.

Jess is devoured by a Meg when it bites through a window thought to be "Meg-proof." Jonas' team escapes to a nearby resort, Fun Island. Driscoll, Montes, and the mercenaries arrive at Fun Island to kill Jonas' crew, but are attacked by the Snappers, who devour Driscoll. Jonas' group splits to evacuate the tourists as the Megs and the octopus attack. Jonas kills the beta male Meg before being attacked by Montes. He knocks Montes into the mouth of the alpha Meg to be eaten. Jiuming creates a bomb out of fertilizer and takes over Driscoll's helicopter with Mac.

The octopus takes down the helicopter and Jiuming injures it with his bomb, attracting Haiqi, who kills the octopus. Jonas uses one of the helicopter's rotors to fatally impale the alpha Meg. Haiqi heads towards Jonas, Jiuming, and Mac, but Jiuming uses his training signals to redirect her to a pod of dolphins. As the group settles on the beach and celebrates their survival, Jiuming mentions the possibility that Haiqi is pregnant.

	<u>Skyler Samuels</u> <u>Cliff Curtis</u>
Cinematography	<u>Haris</u> <u>Zambarloukos</u>
Edited by	<u>Jonathan Amos</u>
Music by	<u>Harry Gregson-Williams</u>
Production companies	<u>CMC Pictures</u> <u>DF Pictures</u> <u>di Bonaventura Pictures</u> <u>Apelles Entertainment</u>
Distributed by	<u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u>
Release dates	June 9, 2023 (<u>SIFF</u>) August 4, 2023 (United States)
Running time	116 minutes ^[1]
Countries	China United States
Language	English
Budget	\$129–139 million ^{[2][3]}
Box office	\$397.7 million ^{[4][5]}

Cast

- Jason Statham as Jonas Taylor, Meiying's stepfather and the husband of the late Suyin Zhang
- Wu Jing as Jiuming Zhang, Meiying's uncle^[6]
- Sophia Cai as Meiying, Jiuming's niece and Jonas' stepdaughter^[7]
- Cliff Curtis as Mac, Mana One operations manager^[7]
- Page Kennedy as DJ, an engineer at Mana One^[7]
- Sergio Peris Mencheta as Montes, a mercenary in charge of illegal mining operations
- Skyler Samuels as Jess, a Mana One worker

- Melissanthi Mahut as Rigas, a security officer at Mana One
- Whoopie Van Raam as Curtis, a diver at Mana One
- Kiran Sonia Sawar as Sal, a diver at Mana One
- Felix Mayr as Lance, a diver at Mana One
- Sienna Guillory as Driscoll, a billionaire investor who is financing Jiuming's efforts in the Mana One^[8]

Production

Development

In April 2018, Jason Statham said a sequel to *The Meg* (2018) would happen if the film did well with the public, saying: "I think it's like anything in this day and age – if it makes money, there's obviously an appetite to make more money. And if it doesn't do well, they'll soon sweep it under the carpet--but that's the way Hollywood works."^[9] In August 2018, Steve Alten said: "My feeling has always been that this is a billion dollar franchise if it was done right. But to be done right you had to get the shark right, get the cast right, get the tone right. And Warner Bros. have nailed it completely. The producers have nailed it."^[10] In October 2018, executive producer Catherine Xujun Ying announced a sequel was in the early stages of development.^[11]

Pre-production

In March 2019, it was announced that a script for the film was in the works, with screenwriters Dean Georgaris, and Jon and Erich Hoeber returning.^{[12][13]} In his September 2020 newsletter, Alten confirmed the script, titled *Meg 2: The Trench*, to be complete, and expressed interest in its "dark" tone.^[14] In October 2020, Ben Wheatley was announced to direct.^{[15][16]}

Filming

In April 2021, Statham said filming was set to begin in January 2022.^[17] Filming commenced as planned at the end of January at the Warner-owned Leavesden Studios outside London, with principal photography starting on February 4, 2022.^[18] It continued there until May before switching to outdoor locations, presumably in Asia. While the production was ongoing, Sienna Guillory, Skyler Samuels, Sergio Peris-Mencheta, and Wu Jing were announced as part of the cast.^[18]

Post-production

DNEG, Scanline VFX and Milk VFX provided the visual effects for the sequel (with DNEG also handling the 3D conversion). Pete Bebb and Gavin Round served as production visual effects supervisor and production visual effects producer respectively.

Music

Harry Gregson-Williams composed the score for the sequel, returning from the first film.^[19] WaterTower Music released a score album on July 28, in addition to the Bankay Ojo's remix version of Page Kennedy's song "Chomp."^[20]

Track listing

All music is composed by Harry Gregson-Williams

No.	Title	Length
1.	"Into the Trench"	6:14
2.	"Rescue Approach"	4:25
3.	"Fun Island"	4:11
4.	"Fighting Montes"	2:23
5.	"Sea Dino Attack"	5:22
6.	"Octopus Attack"	2:49
7.	"Across the Four Seas"	6:26
8.	"Monster vs. Monster"	3:22
9.	"All Systems Down"	3:48
10.	"Close Call"	4:14
11.	"Shark Kill"	1:53
12.	"Reunited with Meiyong"	2:29
13.	"Chomp (Bankey Ojo Remix) (Page Kennedy)"	3:39
Total length:		51:15

^[21]

Release

Meg 2: The Trench was released by Warner Bros. Pictures in the United States on August 4, 2023.^[7] The film had its world premiere at the Shanghai International Film Festival on June 9, 2023.^[22]

Home media

Meg 2: The Trench was released on digital download on August 25, 2023, on the streaming service Max on September 29, and was released on Ultra HD Blu-ray, Blu-ray and DVD on October 24, 2023 by Warner Bros. Home Entertainment.^[23]

Reception

Box office

Meg 2: The Trench grossed \$82.6 million in the United States and Canada, and \$315.1 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$397.7 million.^{[4][5]}

In the United States and Canada, *Meg 2: The Trench* was projected to gross \$20–30 million from 3,503 theaters in its opening weekend.^[2] It made \$12 million on its first day, including \$3.2 million from Thursday night previews. It went on to debut to \$30 million, finishing second behind holdover *Barbie*.^{[3][24]} The film made \$12.8 million and \$6.7 million in its second and third weekends, finishing in fourth and sixth, respectively.^{[25][26]}

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 27% of 182 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 3.9/10. The website's consensus reads: "It isn't without its fun moments, but *Meg 2: The Trench* suffers from a disjointed story that drifts for too long before finally delivering a few campy thrills."^[27] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 40 out of 100, based on 38 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[28] Audiences surveyed by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B−" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled at PostTrak gave it an 72% overall positive score, with 55% saying they would definitely recommend the film.^[24]

In a negative review, *RogerEbert.com*'s Brian Tallerico gave one out of four stars, and wrote, "At least until the final half-hour, when he's finally free to unleash some monstrous chaos, this is one of the dullest films of the year, a plodding, poorly made giant shark movie that inexplicably lets the giant shark take a backseat to an evil underwater drilling operation."^[29]

Richard Lawson wrote in *Vanity Fair*: "*Meg 2* is confident in its schlock, piling on one ridiculous conceit after another at such a pace that the audience can't help but be swept up in it. That is a harder needle to thread than many filmmakers seem to think — it's not enough to just be stupid."^[30]

Accolades

At the 44th Golden Raspberry Awards, the film was nominated for Worst Picture, Worst Actor for Statham and Worst Director for Wheatley.^[31]

Future

In July 2023, Wheatley stated there had been internal discussions about a potential third installment. While its development depends on the success of *The Trench*, he hopes to continue the story as outlined in the novels by Steve Alten.^[32]

See also

- List of underwater science fiction works

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External links

- *Meg 2: The Trench* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9224104/>) at [IMDb](#)
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