

***Megalograptus*** is a [genus](#) of [eurypterid](#), an extir of *Megalograptus* have been recovered in deposi [America](#). The genus contains five species: *M. alv welchi* and *M. williamsae*, all based on fossil material found in the [United States](#). Fossils unassigned to any particular species have also been found in [Canada](#). The generic name translates to "great writing" and originates from the mistaken original belief that *Megalograptus* was a type of [graptolite](#), often given names ending with *-graptus* (meaning 'writing').

**APPROVED By Harry Abad**

*Megalograptus* was a large predatory [megalograptid](#) eurypterid, with the largest and best known species, *M. ohioensis*, reaching lengths of 78 centimeters (2 ft 7 in). Some species were substantially smaller, with the smallest, belonging to a hitherto undetermined species, only growing to about 10 cm (3.9 in) in length. [Morphologically](#), *Megalograptus* was highly distinct. The two most distinctive features of *Megalograptus* were its massive and spined forward-facing [appendages](#), far larger than similar structures in other eurypterids, and its [telson](#) (the last division of the body). The sharp spike-shaped telson of *Megalograptus* was not [venomous](#), but it was specialized in that it was surrounded by unique cercal blades, capable of grasping. Certain fossils of three different species, *M. ohioensis*, *M. shideleri* and *M. williamsae*, are so well-preserved that researchers have been able to infer the coloration they might have possessed in life. All three were deduced to have been brown and black in color, with *M. ohioensis* being darker than the others.

First described by Samuel Almond Miller in 1874, based on fragmentary fossil remains of the species *M. welchi*, *Megalograptus* being a graptolite was not formally questioned until 1908, when [Rudolf Ruedemann](#) recognized the fossils as eurypterid remains. *Megalograptus* was noted as being similar to [Echinognathus](#) by [August Foerste](#) in 1912 and the two genera have been considered closely related since then, and have been grouped together in the Megalograptidae since 1955. In 2015, the genus [Pentecopterus](#) was also assigned to the family. Kenneth E. Caster and Erik N. Kjellesvig-Waering revised *Megalograptus* in 1955, owing to the discovery of more complete fossil material of the new species *M. ohioensis*. Caster and Kjellesvig-Waering conducted further work on *Megalograptus* over the following years. In 1964, they named the species *M. shideleri* and *M. williamsae* and reclassified the fragmentary eurypterid [Ctenopterus alveolatus](#) as a species of *Megalograptus*.

*Megalograptus* lived in near-shore marine environments, where it used its large appendages, and possibly its telson and cercal blades, to capture prey. Possible [coprolites](#) (fossilized dung) are known from *M. ohioensis*, which contain fossil [trilobite](#) fragments as well as fragments of *M. ohioensis* itself. This suggests that *Megalograptus* might have been [cannibalistic](#) at times, like many modern [chelicerates](#).