

# Rare Nautilus



*Peter Ward, a University of Washington marine biologist, found it off the coast of Papua New Guinea. They are an ancient lineage of animal, often christened a “living fossil” because their distinctive shells appear in the fossil record over an impressive 500 million year period.*

*Image Credit: Peter Ward/Via washington.edu*



A rare nautilus, *Allonautilus scrobiculatus*, spotted for the first time in more than 30 years. Peter Ward, a University of Washington marine biologist, found it off the coast of Papua New Guinea. It's on the right, with its distinctive slimy shell, swimming with the more common *Nautilus pompilius*.

They are an ancient lineage of animal, often christened a “living fossil” because their distinctive shells appear in the fossil record over an impressive 500 million year period. Illegal fishing and “mining” operations for nautilus shells have already decimated some populations. This unchecked practice could threaten a lineage that has been around longer than the dinosaurs were and survived the two largest mass extinctions in Earth's history.

*Source: www.washington.edu*