

Megalodon - a giant transoceanic predator

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In news- Recently, researchers have found new evidence about the life of one of the biggest predatory animals of all time, the Megalodon.

What does the new study say?

- According to the new study, the Megalodon could “completely ingest, and in as few as five bites,” a prey as big as the killer whale.
- It says that the **Megalodon was bigger than a school bus at around 50 feet from nose to tail.**
- In comparison, the great white sharks of the present can grow to a maximum length of around 15 feet.
- **Using their digital model, the researchers have suggested that the giant transoceanic predator would have weighed around 70 tonnes** or as much as 10 elephants.
- They **roamed the oceans an estimated 23 million to 2.6 million years ago.**
- Using a previously established relationship between speed and body mass, researchers calculated that the Megalodon had an **average cruising speed faster than sharks today.**
- 3D modelling research was used as the Megalodon’s skeleton is made of soft cartilage that doesn’t fossilize well.
- Using fossils that were available, including mainly teeth and a rare collection of vertebrae that has been with a Belgium museum since the 1860s, computer modelling was used to reconstruct the entire body of the extinct and largest known macropredatory shark.
- Megalodon, meaning “big tooth”, is an extinct species of

mackerel shark that lived approximately 23 to 3.6 million years ago, from the Early Miocene to the Pliocene epochs.

- It was formerly thought to be a member of the family Lamnidae and a close relative of the great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*).
- However, it is now classified into the extinct family Otodontidae, which diverged from the great white shark during the Early Cretaceous.