

Rare horseshoe crab fossil named in honour of N.S. woman

Sonja Wood and her husband Chris Mansky call Blue Beach, N.S. home.

The location, filled with fossils, is the perfect spot for the [Blue Beach Fossil Museum](#).

For the last 15 years, the self-taught paleontologists have run the Blue Beach Fossil Museum and have amassed 90,000 pounds of rock with fossil, including tetrapods, fish, and plants.

Their collection dates back 360 million years, making it the oldest in the world.

“We're sitting on an unrealized bonanza or mother-load of information,” says Mansky.

The museum sits on a natural goldmine for fossils, as Blue Beach is on the Bay of Fundy and the world's highest and fastest tides make fossils easy to spot.

“It's a very small scarp that shows probably one of the most important pieces of evolutionary information,” says Wood.

Mansky's research on the horseshoe crab was recently published in a paleontology journal.

In the scientific paper, detailing the work of Mansky and two scientists from the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, an extremely rare horseshoe crab fossil from Nova Scotia is described as a new species.

“Out of the tens of thousands of fossils that have been gathered (on Blue Beach) only two were horseshoe crab,” says Mansky.

The new species has been given the name *Paleolimulus woodae*, in honour of Wood's efforts to protect the collection of Blue Beach fossils.

“To be looked at as someone who is special to our colleagues and to the research and to the future of the collection, I'm very honoured,” says Wood.

The horseshoe crab fossils found on Blue Beach are the earliest representatives of the suborder Limulina, a group which includes all modern horseshoe crabs, the family Paleolimulidae, and the genus *Paleolimulus*.

With files from CTV Atlantic's Kelly Linehan