

Bones washed ashore those of a whale, says expert

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KOTA KINABALU: The "mystery" has been solved. The skeletal remains found by fishermen in the south-western Membakut district of Sabah two weeks ago have been identified as the bones of a whale and a dolphin and not those of a pre-historic reptile.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah marine biologist Dr Ridwan Abdul Rahman said the bones that were washed ashore at the Tanjung Pogong Pogong beach on Pulau Tiga were partial skeletal remains of a whale from the *Balaenopteridae* family and bones of a bottle-nosed dolphin.

The fishermen had stumbled upon the remains at the Pulau Tiga island, which was the setting of one of the popular

Survivor reality series aired on television.

The discovery of the remains on March 30 caused a stir among the villagers at Binsuluk, some 80km from the city, as one of the bones was said to bear strong resemblance to a picture of a skull of the prehistoric Plesiosaur marine reptile, dating back to more than 200 million years.

"Since the fishermen only found partial skeletal remains, we believe they could be either the bones of a Bryde's whale, a Minke whale, a Sei whale or a Blue whale. These species have been spotted in Malaysian waters," Dr Ridwan said yesterday.

He added that if the skeletal remains was an adult animal, it was likely to be a Minke whale which could grow up to 9m.