Seafloor

Cambrian fossils are exclusively marine and appear to have lived on or near the seafloor. Most animal phyla appear first in Cambrian sediments. The fossils displayed on this shelf are from the famous Burgess Shale of Alberta, Canada, a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Artist's portrayal of underwater creatures found in Cambrian sediments

Image: Shutterstock No.1376938808, by Dotted Yeti

Seafloor

Ordovician fossils are exclusively marine and lived on or near the seafloor. Ordovician rocks have a much greater diversity of species than Cambrian rocks.

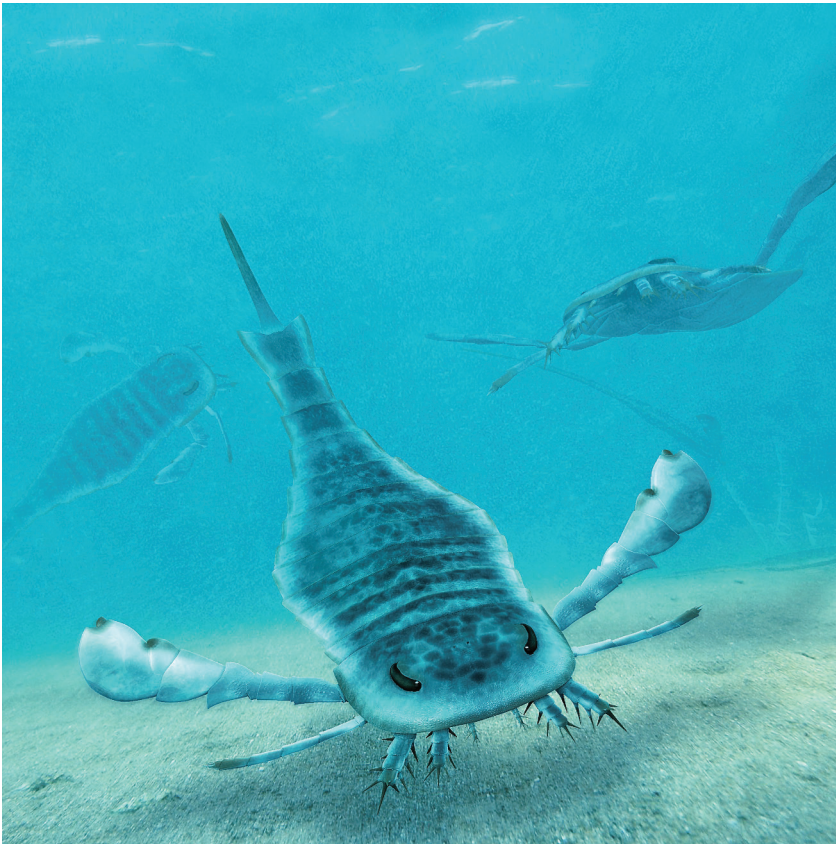


Ordovician diorama

Image: Shutterstock #470768891, by ADWO

Seafloor

Silurian fossils are almost all marine, but a few terrestrial fossils have been found, such as the two types of land plants in this display.



Artist's portrayal of the Sea Scorpion, *Eurypterus*

Image: Obsidian Soul, background by Dimitris Siskopoulos, CC by SA 2.0

Strong Swimmers

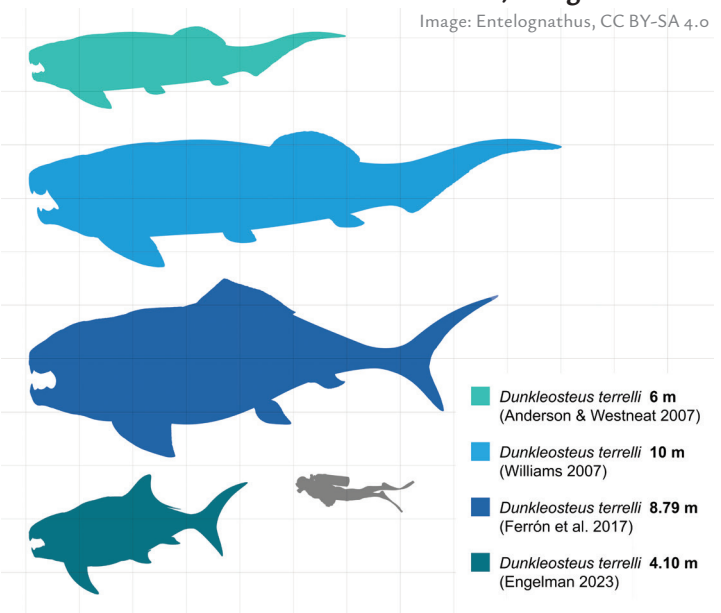
Devonian fossils include seafloor species and also strong swimmers such as fish and cephalopods.

A few kinds of trees and other land plants, and some insects, have been found in Devonian rocks.



Artistic portrayal of *Dunkleosteus terrelli*, a huge armored fish

Image: Entelognathus, CC BY-SA 4.0



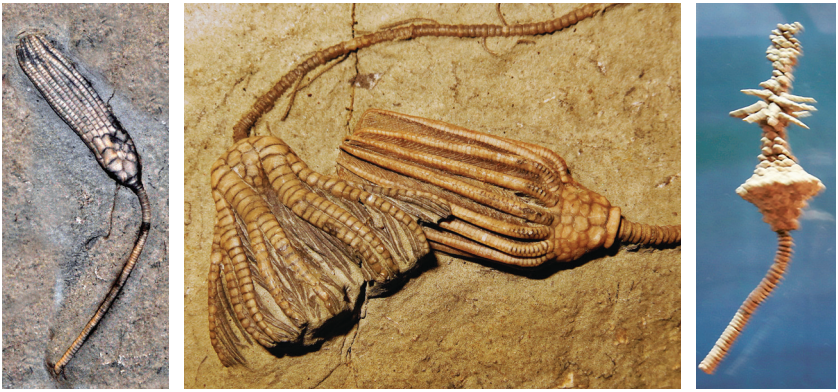
Multiple size and shape estimations of *Dunkleosteus terrelli*

Image: PaleoNeolitic, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Ocean Shores

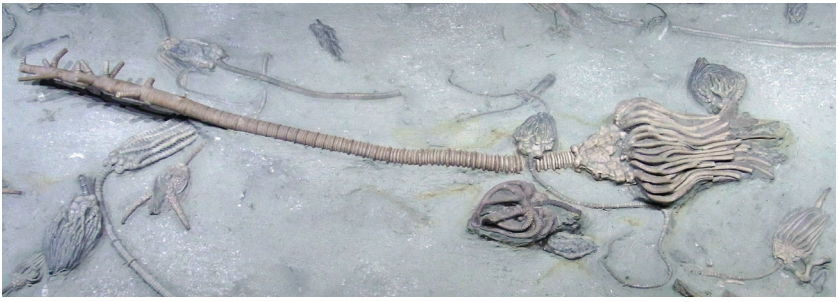
Mississippian fossils are largely marine, including seafloor and swimming species, but with a good variety of land plants also. Some Mississippian rocks are composed largely of crinoids.

Mississippian Crinoids from Crawfordsville, Indiana



Left: *Ulrichicrinus* | Center: *Macrocrinus* | Right: *Uperocrinus*

Images: ***Left:*** Hectornichus, CC by SA 3.0 | ***Center:*** Ghedoghedo, CC by SA 4.0 | ***Right:*** Cliff CC by SA 2.0



Crinoid slab

Image: Rainer Halama, CC by SA 3.0

Lowlands

Pennsylvanian and Permian fossils include many marine species and also many land animals and plants. These layers are famous for their coal.



Artist's portrayal of two Permian vertebrates

Left: *Dimetrodon* | **Right:** *Eryops*

Image: Dmitry Bogdanov, CC by SA 3.0

Lowlands

Terrestrial species are increasingly common in Triassic and Jurassic rocks. Large sauropod dinosaurs and marine cephalopods are prominent in Jurassic sediments.



Artist's portrayal of two Sauropod dinosaurs
Left: *Diplodicus* | **Right:** *Brontosaurus*
Image: Charles R Knight, 1897, Public Domain

Uplands

Cretaceous rocks have many terrestrial fossils, including dinosaurs and flowering plants. Marine fossils are abundant in some places on the continents, but the overlying sediments have marine fossils only along the continental edges.



Artist's portrayal of Cretaceous dinosaurs

Foreground: *Dineobellator notohesperus* | **Approaching:** *Ojoceratops fowleri*
Background: *Alamosaurus sanjuanensis*

Image: Sergey Krasovskiy, CC by SA 4.0

Uplands

Fossils found in Cretaceous rocks include many flowering plants, dinosaurs, and large marine reptiles. An unusually large number of Cretaceous localities preserve soft-bodied fossils.



Artist's portrayal of a pterosaur, *Cearadactylus* from Brazil

Image: Smokeybjb, CC by SA 3.0

Uplands

Paleogene fossils are mostly terrestrial except for the continental margins, where marine fossils are common.



Image: Avrand6, Denver Museum, CC by SA 4.0



Artist's portrayal of the extinct mammal *Daeodon (Dinohyus)*

Image: Bigmacthealmanac, Denver Museum, CC BY-SA 4.0