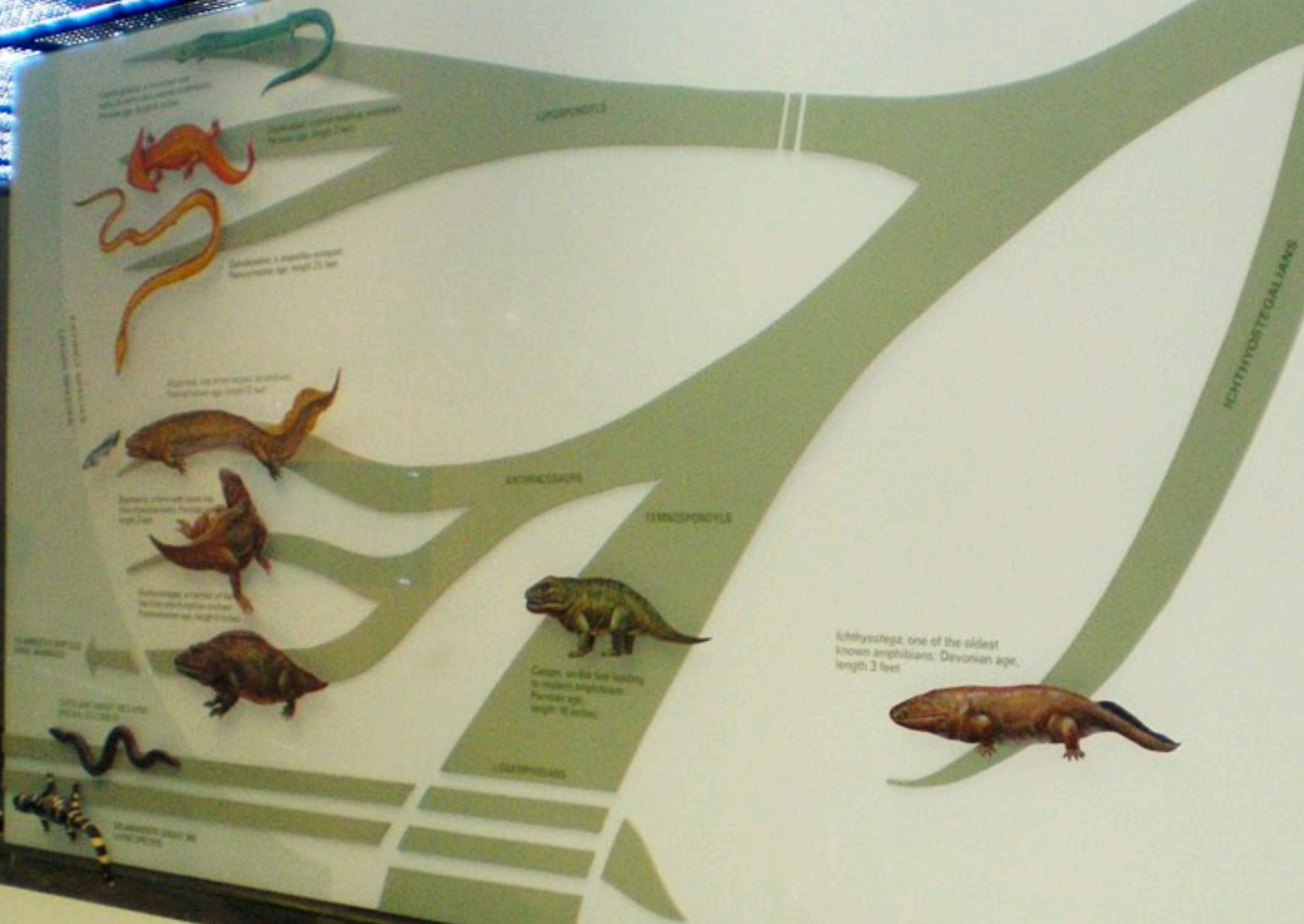




*Eusthenopteron*, a lobe-fin fish (rhypidistian) of the sort that gave rise to amphibians; Devonian age, length 2 feet



*Ichthyostega*, one of the oldest known amphibians; Devonian age, length 3 feet



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Amphibians had their origin in the rhipidistian fishes, represented today by the famous "living fossil" coelacanth, *Latimeria*. Of the many evolutionary lines established, only the major ones appear on this diagram. Except for the frogs, salamanders and caecilians, amphibians became extinct by the end of the Triassic Period, about 180 million years ago. One of the now-extinct lines, however, gave rise to the reptiles and thus, eventually, to birds and mammals. Evolutionary relationships of modern amphibians are obscure; possibly the three groups are not so closely related as our diagram implies. Caecilians (see Case 8) and salamanders are relatively small assemblages, but frogs, little changed since dinosaurs were alive, are abundant and diverse.

