Earliest Vertebrates

The earliest vertebrates were fish-like animals without jaws (Agnatha), which present today as the ctenodactylians (Hagfish, lampreys). Most ancestral of the fish-like creatures were the Osteichthyes, found in beds of lake Silurian and early Devonian age. Modern groups of fish descended from these ancestors. Together with the Ctenodactylians, another group of ancient fish, the Placoderms which are now totally extinct, close, and also extinct relatives of the modern bony fish were also present at this time, the Chondrichthyes. Because of the varied fish life in the Devonian, this age has been termed the "Age of Fish".

Modern Fish

There are three groups of living fish:
1. Bony fish (Osteichthyes)
2. Cartilaginous fish: sharks, rays, rays (Chondrichthyes)
3. Lobe-finned (Chondrichthyes)

Placodermiformes

The Development of Modern Fishes

Cartilaginous fish (Chondrichthyes)

Sclerocormiformes

Acanthodiformes

Acanthodiformes

Family Tree of the Lobe Finned Fishes

Family Tree of Bony Fishes

Family Tree of the Lobe Finned Fishes