

COMMON FOSSILS of INDIANA

Fossils are the preserved remains of creatures from long ago. Most Indiana fossils are from the Paleozoic Era, 542 million to 250 million years ago. During that time, Indiana was covered periodically by shallow seas. Thus, the majority of Indiana fossils are marine fossils.

Brachiopods are among the most common fossils in Indiana rocks. They resemble clams, but are a distinct type of marine animal.

Bryozoans live together in colonies and form branching stemlike, lacy, or encrusting forms. A single zooid is hardly bigger than a comma on a printed page.

Crinoids, related to starfish, thrived in ancient seas over 200 million years ago. Early forms were attached to the sea floor on stems, but later varieties could crawl and swim. Today, crinoids still live in warm, temperate seas.

Bivalves (clams) are mollusks that have two-part shells. Both valves are symmetrical (in other words, they match) along the hinge line. Mussels, clams, oysters, and scallops are species of bivalves.

Corals, when alive, are brightly colored animals that live in colonies. Corals have been around for over 400 million years and are the most abundant reef-building organisms. They cannot move from place to place, but capture prey by using tentacles armed with stinging cells.



brachiopods



bryozoans



crinoids



bivalves (clams)



corals