

# Fish

Fish are common fossils found in both the lakes and streams that developed in the rift valley as Australia separated from Antarctica. The coarse nature of the channel sediments means that the skeletons of complete fish are not preserved, but many fish jaws, teeth and scales are found. However, to the north, the lake sediments at Koonwarra have produced a wealth of complete skeletons.

The size of the fish jaws found along the Bass Coast range from a couple of centimetres to a huge 10 cm jaw, complete with dagger-like teeth, suggesting the fish was around 80-90 cm long when alive.

Lungfish teeth have also been found at a number of localities along the Bass Coast, suggesting this fish was quite numerous and diverse in the polar rivers. Today, modern lungfish live in tropical rivers, such as the Mary River in Queensland, but 120 million years ago they obviously thrived in colder water. In the past, lungfish had a much higher diversity worldwide, inhabiting both oceans and freshwater.

Lungfish have hardly changed physically for millions of years, but they no longer live in temperate environments.



**Artist: Jeremy Kool. (G. & L. Kool Private Collection)**