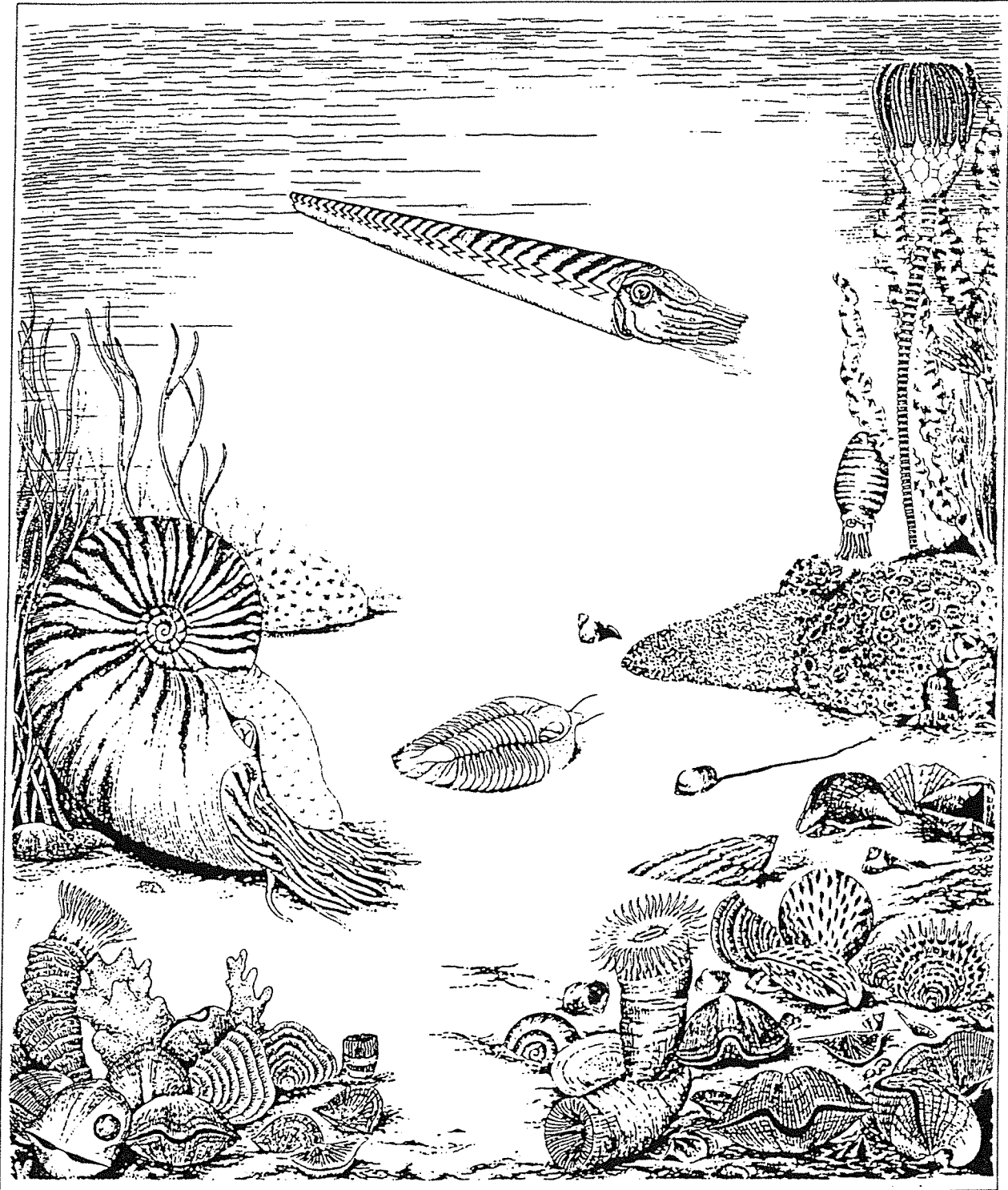
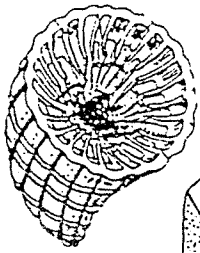


Fossils of the Lake Champlain Region



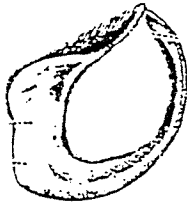
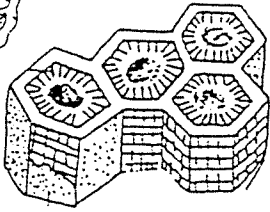
These animals lived here over 400 million years ago, when the area that is now the Lake Champlain Basin was part of a shallow tropical sea. The fossils were formed when shells, other hard parts of plants and animals or traces of the organisms, such as worm borings or animal tracks, were buried in limey mud. Over time, this mud cemented into limestone and shale.

Fossils of the Lake Champlain Region

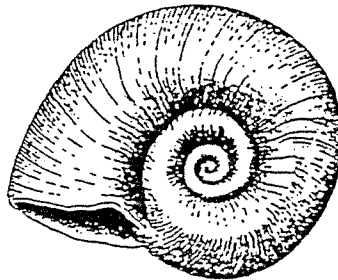


Coral

Corals are tiny flower-like animals that live in colonies. They are soft-bodied but secrete hard outer skeletons that form coral reefs. The fossils found in Vermont represent the first known species of coral.

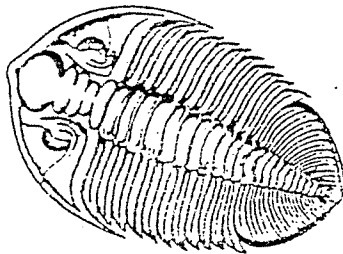


operculum



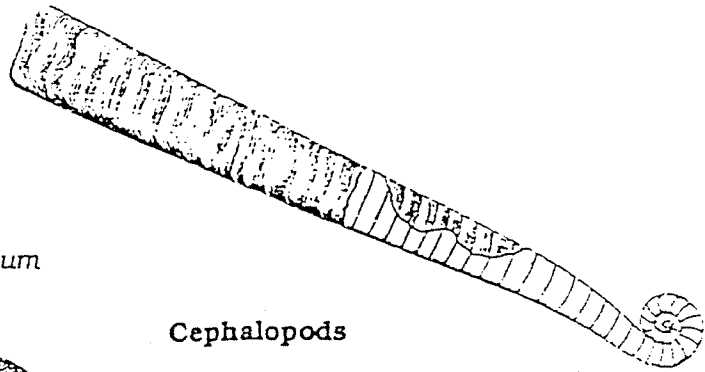
Gastropods

Gastropods or snails can be found in almost any habitat. All snails have a well-defined head with eyes and tentacles, a main body that houses the internal organs, and a foot. Many of the snail fossils of Lake Champlain are large. Sometimes all that remains is the operculum, a hard covering that protects the foot of the snail.



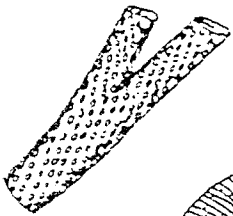
Trilobites

Trilobites, ancient lobster-like creatures, are true representatives of their time. They first appeared about 520 million years ago, reached their height about 440 million years ago, and were extinct 400 million years ago. Like lobsters and crabs, they shed their shell to grow, leaving behind many fragments to fossilize.



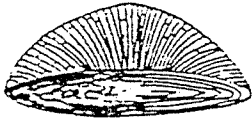
Cephalopods

Cephalopods are related to gastropods. Cephalopods lack feet and their shells are chambered. The cephalopods fossilized here are related to the chambered nautilus of today.



Bryozoans

Bryozoans are commonly called moss animals because of their appearance. Like coral, they are tiny soft-bodied animals that live in colonies. Each animal lives in its own chamber, giving the colony a honeycomb appearance. The most common bryozoan fossils here resemble twigs and gum drops.



Brachiopods

Brachiopods are one of the easiest fossils to find. A brachiopod shell looks like a clamshell, but has a distinct ridge running down the center. There are no brachiopods living today.



columnals

Crinoids

Crinoids are related to starfish and sea urchins. They look like plants because the animal lives in a cup atop a stalk of columnals. Most often, only the fossilized columnals are found.

Please Note:
Fossil collecting is not permitted on state lands.

The Geologic History of Lake Champlain

1.3 billion years ago	Ancient Adirondacks This mountain range was formed.
450 million years ago	Iapetus Ocean This ocean was a shallow tropical sea. Its shells and organic debris were cemented in limestone.
440–350 million years ago	Green Mountains This mountain range was formed.
2.5 million years ago	Ice Age Glaciers carved the soft sedimentary rock in the Champlain Valley.
21,000 years ago	Glaciers Glaciers started melting northward toward New England.
14,000–15,000 years ago	Lake Vermont A large, deep lake was formed as the glaciers melted then blocked the outflow of water.
13,000 years ago	Champlain Sea The sea replaced Lake Vermont when ocean water from the north flooded the basin. The sea supported varied marine life, like the Charlotte whale!
11,000 years ago	Lake Champlain The lake was formed when the area was cut off by glacial rebound, sea water was flushed out.

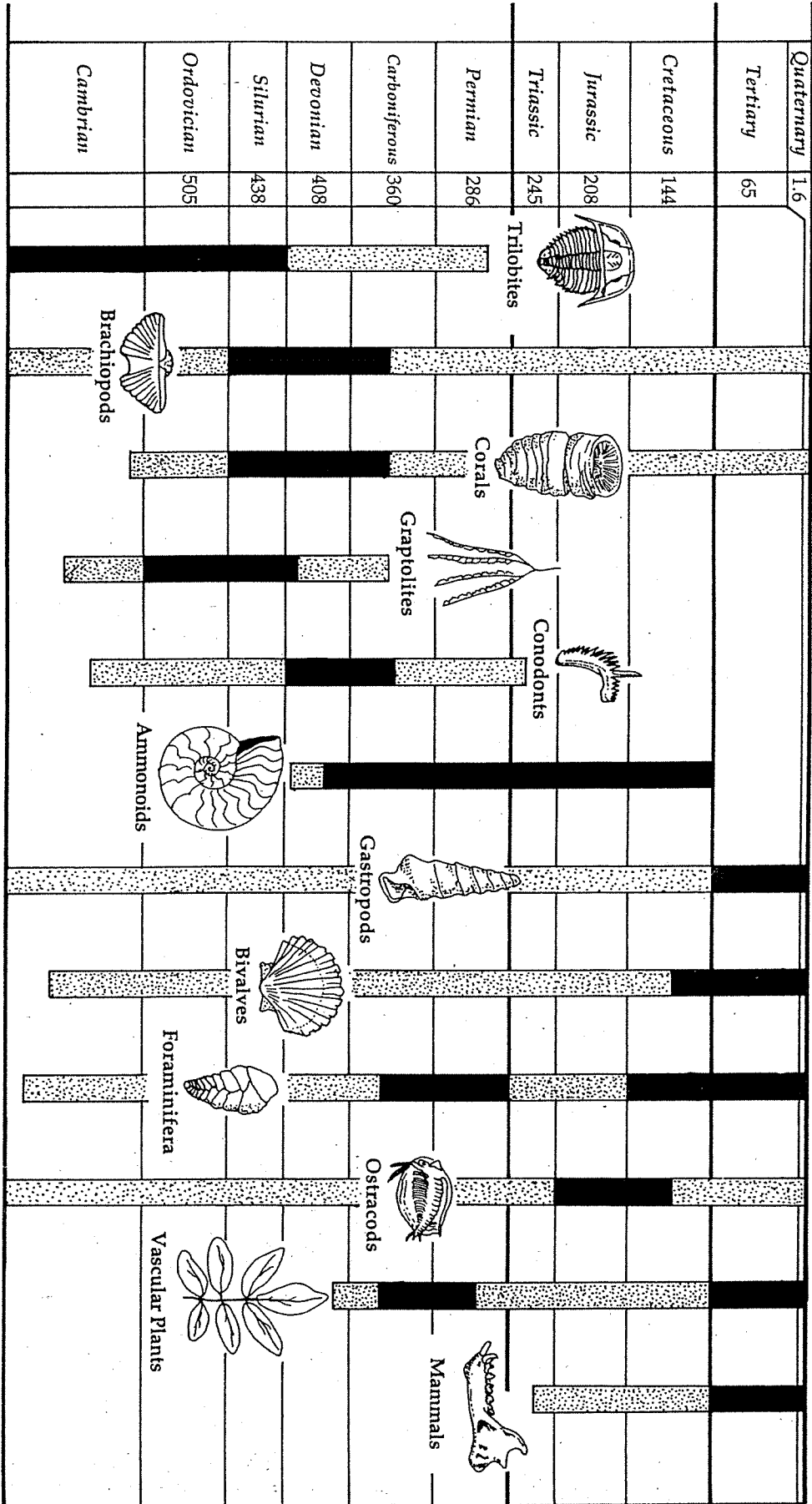
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
Period

Millions of years before present (sources vary slightly)

Paleozoic

Mesozoic Cenozoic



 Present in the fossil record
 Important index fossils