

# Read the Fossil Record for Stories of Earth's History

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Long before humans created written records of life on Earth, the fossil record told its own fascinating story. The [National Park Service](#) celebrates those stories with [National Fossil Day](#) each year on the Wednesday of [Earth Science Week](#).

Fossils found in Indiana were mostly deposited in the Paleozoic Era, about 250 to 542 million years ago. Since Indiana was periodically covered with shallow seas during that time, our fossils are generally small marine creatures like [brachiopods](#), [bryozoans](#), [crinoids](#), [bivalves](#) and [corals](#).

Locally, there are lots of ways to "read" bits of the fossil record. You can go to almost any limestone formations around Monroe County, for example, and just start looking for fossils. Even limestone buildings often reveal small exposed fossils, if you take the time to look.

The most accessible fossil location around here is at [Allens Creek State Recreation Area](#). There's a fossil bed right on the lakeshore, accessible via the [Turkey Trot Trail](#) or an easy paddle in a canoe or kayak. IU Geology also has a [field trip guide for Allen's Creek](#). Just a reminder, though: taking anything—including fossils—from a State Park or Recreation Area is prohibited. (Fortunately, one exception is just up the road at [Paynetown State Recreation Area](#), where there's a big box of [Waldron Shale](#), known to contain fossils, that visitors can dig through and take home what they find.)

Another great place to see a large fossil bed in southern Indiana is at [Falls of the Ohio State Park](#). The fossils in the museum there are not to be missed, and you can hike around the ancient coral beds that once covered this part of the state. On National Fossil Day, admission is free after 5 p.m., and this year Ron Richards, Indiana State Museum expert on Indiana Ice Age animals, will be speaking. Fossil-related crafts and fossils you can touch will be part of the activities as well.

And as always, you can learn more about [what science has discovered from fossils](#) through the Library's collection.

Posted by Paula G.O. on October 11, 2017  
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