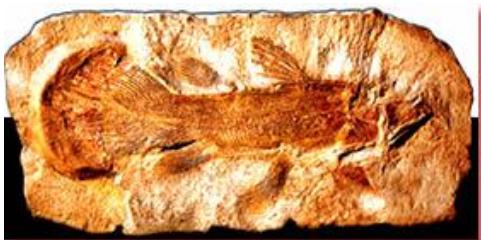


### Speculations About Coelacanths

Fish that came under the coelacanth family were once accepted as strong evidence for transitional forms. Basing their argument on coelacanth fossils, evolutionary biologists proposed that this fish had a primitive (not completely functioning) lung. Many scientific publications stated the fact, together with drawings showing how coelacanths passed to land from water. All these rested on the assumption that the coelacanth was an extinct species.



When they only had fossils of coelacanths, evolutionary paleontologists put forward a number of Darwinist assumptions regarding them; however, when living examples were found, all these assumptions were shattered.

Below, examples of living coelacanths. The picture on the right below shows the latest specimen of coelacanth, found in Indonesia in 1998.



However on December 22, 1938, a very interesting discovery was made in the Indian Ocean. A living member of the coelacanth family, previously presented as a transitional form that had become extinct 70 million years ago, was caught! The discovery of a "living" prototype of the coelacanth undoubtedly gave evolutionists a severe shock. The evolutionary paleontologist J. L. B. Smith said, "If I'd meet a dinosaur in the street I wouldn't have been more astonished."<sup>88</sup> In the years to come, 200 coelacanths were caught many times in different parts of the world.

Living coelacanths revealed how groundless the speculation regarding them was. Contrary to what had been claimed, coelacanths had neither a primitive lung nor a large brain. The organ that evolutionist researchers had proposed as a primitive lung turned out to be nothing but a fat-filled swimbladder.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the coelacanth, which was introduced as "a reptile candidate preparing to pass from sea to land," was in reality a fish that lived in the depths of the oceans and never approached nearer than 180 meters from the surface.<sup>90</sup>

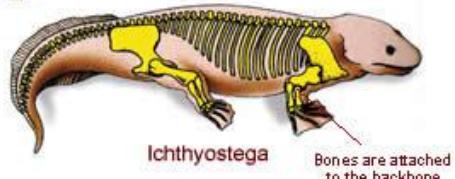
### THE FISH OF THE CAMBRIAN

1



Coelacanth's fin

2



Ichthyostega's feet

The fundamental reason why evolutionists imagine coelacanths and similar fish to be "the ancestor of land animals" is that they have bony fins. They imagine that these gradually turned into feet. However, there is a fundamental difference between fish bones and the feet of land animals such as Ichthyostega: As shown in Picture 1, the bones of the coelacanth are not attached to the backbone; however, those of Ichthyostega are, as shown in Picture 2. For this reason, the claim that these fins gradually developed into feet is quite unfounded. Furthermore, the structure of the bones in coelacanth fins is very different from that in the bones in Ichthyostega feet, as seen in Pictures 3 and 4.

Following this, the coelacanth suddenly lost all its popularity in evolutionist publications. Peter Forey, an evolutionary paleontologist, says in an article of his in *Nature*:

*The discovery of Latimeria raised hopes of gathering direct information on the transition of fish to amphibians, for there was*

*then a long-held belief that coelacanths were close to the ancestry of tetrapods. ...But studies of the anatomy and physiology of Latimeria have found this theory of relationship to be wanting and the living coelacanth's reputation as a missing link seems unjustified.*<sup>91</sup>

This meant that the only serious claim of a transitional form between fish and amphibians had been demolished.



88 Jean-Jacques Hublin, *The Hamlyn Encyclopædia of Prehistoric Animals*, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., New York, 1984, p. 120. <sup>†</sup>

89 [www.ksu.edu/fishecology/relict.htm](http://www.ksu.edu/fishecology/relict.htm) <sup>†</sup>

90 <http://www.cnn.com/TECH/science/9809/23/living.fossil/index.html> <sup>†</sup>

91 P. L. Forey, *Nature*, vol. 336, 1988, p. 727. <sup>†</sup>