

The area above the cliff (above the lower fossil beds) is the upper fossil beds. Here you will find a greater variety of fossils. They tend to be smaller and some require closer examination. These fossil-bearing layers are exposed most of the year. They are usually under water during mid-winter to mid-spring. Look for corals that are typically smaller than the corals in the lower fossil beds. Shells called brachiopods are very abundant, both in the orangish brown layer and in the highest limestone layers (before you reach the river gravel and sand). Delicate lacy fan-like bryozoans may be found here, too. The individual animals that made up this colonies require at least 10x magnification to be seen. Portions of the columns of crinoids (sea lilies) can be found in this layer. Some look like washers, other like threaded bolts. These are the remains of animals, not plants. The original creature can best be described as an upside-down starfish on a stem. Look carefully, and you might find a giant snail up to four inches in diameter. The remnants of trilobites, animals that scurried along the sea floor like crabs or lobster today, may be found, but are fairly rare.

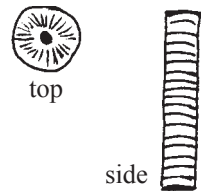
References Cited

Davis, W. J., 1887. Kentucky fossil corals
 Greene, G. K., 1898-1904 Contributions to
 Indiana paleontology: v. 1
 Kentucky Fossil Shells, 1889. Henry Nettleroth,
 Ky. Geological Survey

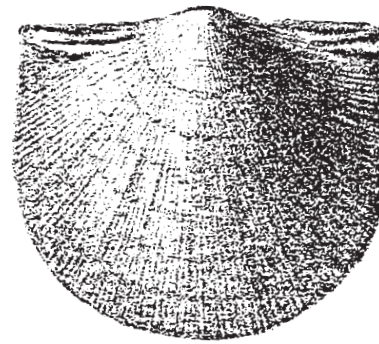
Upper Fossil Bed



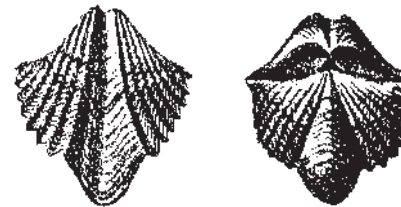
Trilobite Tail



Crinoid Stems



Large Brachiopod
Megastrophia



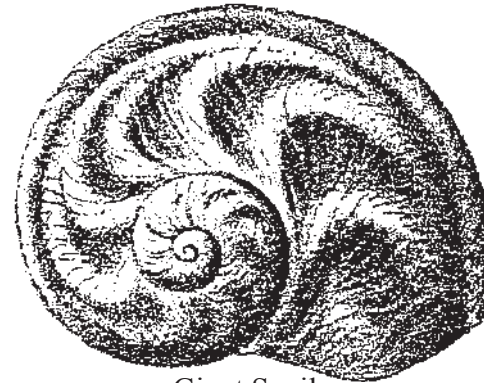
Small Brachiopod
Brevispirifer



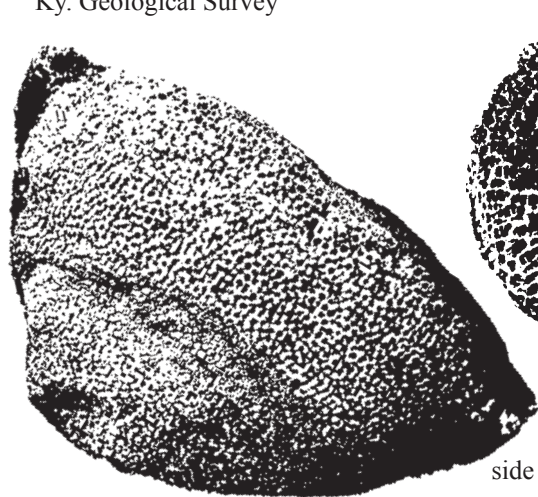
Lacy Bryozoan



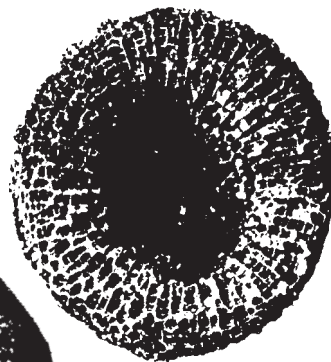
Horn Coral
Zaphrentis



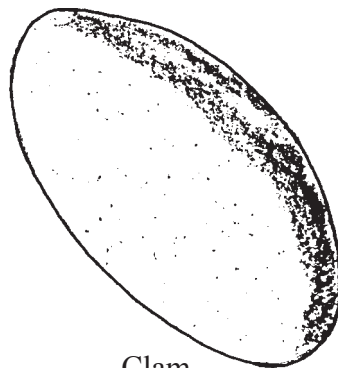
Giant Snail
Turbinopsis



"Knee Cap" Coral - *Favosites*



bottom



Clam

**Discovering Fossils
at the
Falls of the Ohio State Park**

This brochure was created to help you identify fossils at the Falls of the Ohio. Remember - collecting fossils at the Falls is against the law!

The fossil beds are made of limestone, a type of sedimentary rock. This limestone was formed beneath a shallow inland sea. Over millions of years, sediment composed of fossil skeletons large and small was compressed from a sandy or muddy sea floor to hard rock as the weight of overlying sediment was added. Only in the last million years has the river exposed the rock at the falls.

The fossil beds can be divided into "lower" and "upper" rock layers. The lower fossil beds are under water for much of the year. They are exposed sporadically in the summer and early winter, and are almost always exposed in September and October. These are the large flat areas on both the Indiana and Kentucky side of the river.

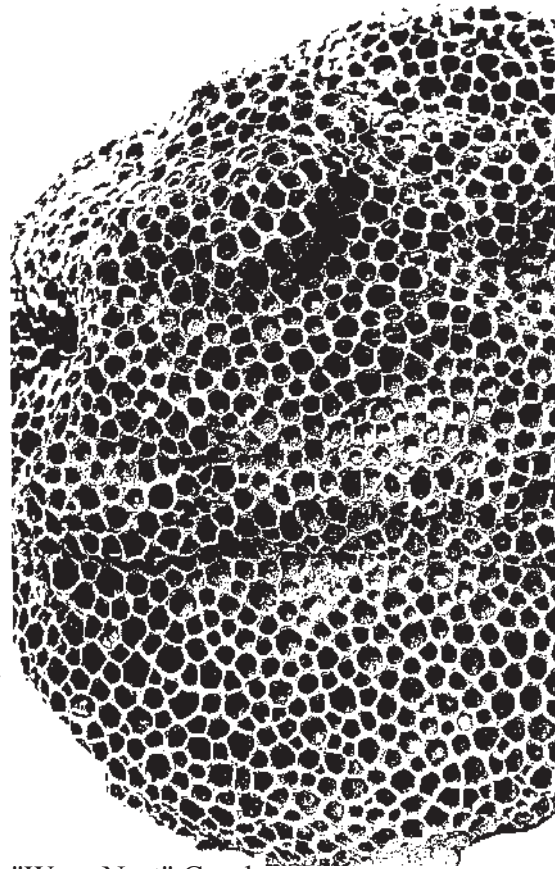


"Honey Comb" Coral

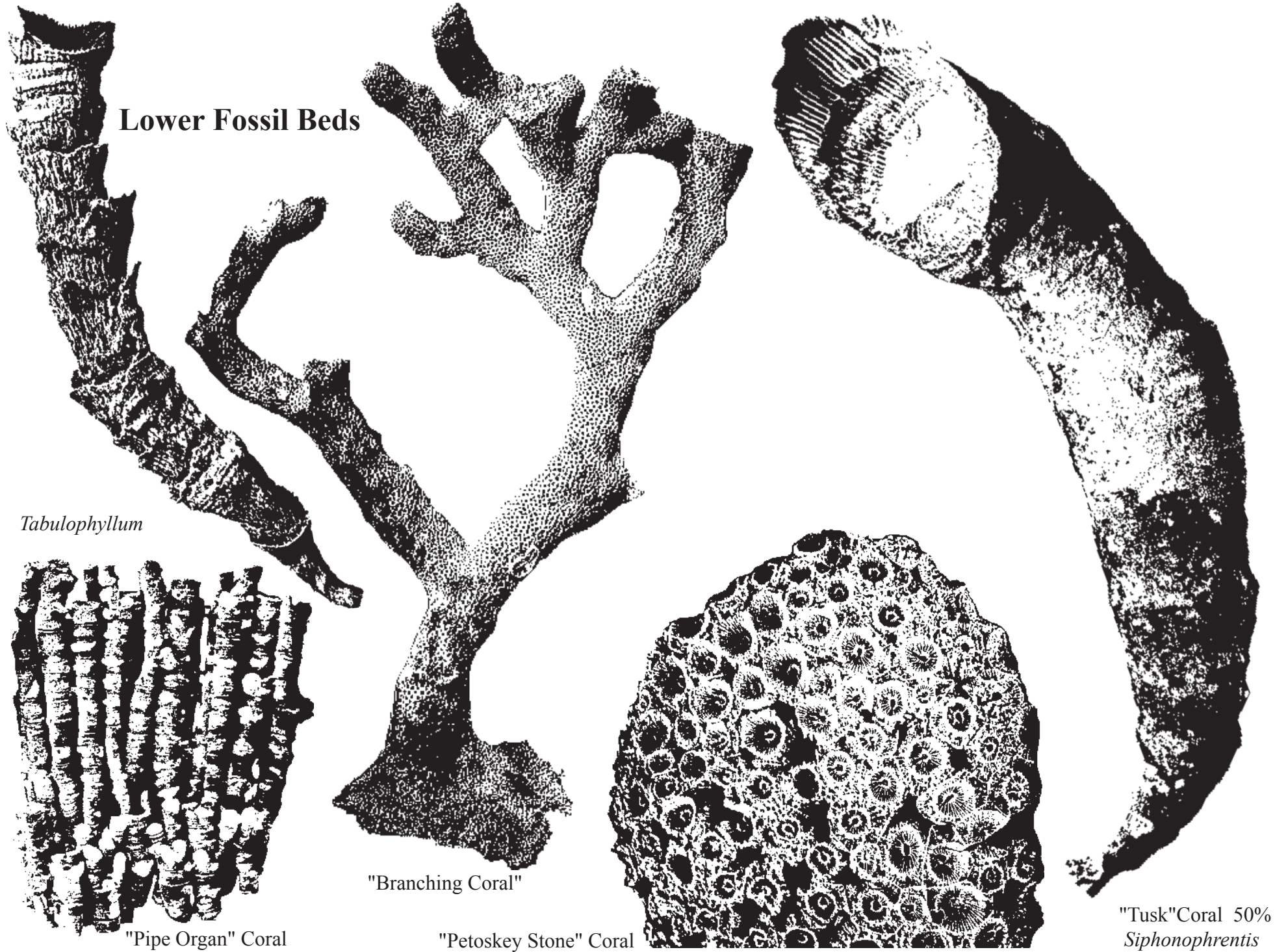
Falls of the Ohio State Park
 201 W. Riverside Drive
 Clarksville, Indiana 47129

DNR
 Indiana Department of Natural Resources
 Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
 Interpreters Service

The "claim to fame" of the lower fossil beds is that it is possible to walk over a single layer on the ancient ocean floor for several acres. This could be compared to walking on a dry ocean bottom today. That is very unusual. This layer is dominated by colonial corals, horn corals and sponges called stromatoporoids. The uniform texture of the rock in the giant coral and sponge colonies cause them to erode at a different rate than the surrounding limestone and causes many to form low mounds. Where corals occur as thousands of tiny "fingers" in the limestone, splash water on them and they will "jump out" showing exquisite detail. These illustrations in this brochure will help you recognize certain kinds of corals. There are over 100 species of coral in the lower fossil beds. To keep things simple, this brochure uses common names when they are available.



"Wasp Nest" Coral



Lower Fossil Beds

Tabulophyllum

"Pipe Organ" Coral

"Branching Coral"

"Petoskey Stone" Coral

"Tusk" Coral 50%
Siphonophrentis