Multituberculate

Multituberculates Temporal range: early Jurassic–end Eocene ~200 to ~34 million years ago

Skull of *Ptilodus*

Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Mammalia
Subclass:	Allotheria
Order:	†**Multituberculata** Cope, 1884

Suborders

- †Cimolodonta
- †Plagiaulacida

The **multituberculates** were a group of rodent-like mammals which survived for about 166 million years – the longest fossil history of any mammal line.[1][2]

They were eventually outcompeted by rodents, becoming extinct during the late Eocene.[3]

At least 200 species are known, ranging from mouse-sized to beaver-sized. These species occupied many ecological niches, ranging from burrow-dwelling to squirrel-like tree-dwelling.[4]

Multituberculates are usually placed outside both the two main groups of living mammals, the Theria (placentals and marsupials), and monotremes. Some cladistic analyses put them closer to Theria than to monotremes.[5][6]

Biology

[change | change source]

The multituberculates had a head anatomy similar to rodents. They had cheek-teeth separated from the chisel-like front teeth by a wide tooth-less gap (called the *diastema*). Each cheek-tooth displayed several rows of small cusps (or tubercles, hence the name) which worked against similar rows in the teeth of the jaw. It was an efficient chopping device.

Most small multituberculates would have eaten seeds and nuts, supplemented with insects, worms, and fruit.

The structure of the pelvis in the Multituberculata suggests that they gave birth to tiny helpless young, similar to modern marsupials.[4][7]

References

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Wikispecies has information on: ***Multituberculata***.

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