

# Some Important Events in the History of Life

## Millions of Years Ago

## Epoch

## Period

## Era

## Relative Time Span

Historical time

Ice ages; humans appear

Ancestors of humans appear

Mammals and flowering plants continue to diversify

Many primate groups, including apes, appear

Flowering plants increase in abundance; most modern mammals appear

Mammals, birds, and pollinating insects increase greatly in diversity

Flowering plants appear; many groups of organisms, including dinosaurs, become extinct at end of period (Cretaceous extinctions)

Cone-bearing plants dominate landscape; dinosaurs diversify

Cone-bearing plants continue to dominate kingdom; dinosaurs abundant and diverse

Many marine and terrestrial organisms go extinct; reptiles diversify; mammal-like reptiles and most modern insects appear

Forests of vascular plants; first seed plants; reptiles appear; amphibians dominant

Bony fishes diversify; first amphibians and insects

Diversity of jawless fishes; first jawed fishes; early vascular plants diversify

Marine algae abundant; plants and arthropods colonize land

Most modern animal groups appear (Cambrian explosion)

Diverse soft-bodied invertebrate animals; diverse algae

Oldest fossils of eukaryotic cells

Atmospheric oxygen begins to increase

Oldest fossils of cells (prokaryotes)

Earliest traces of life

Approximate time of origin of Earth

