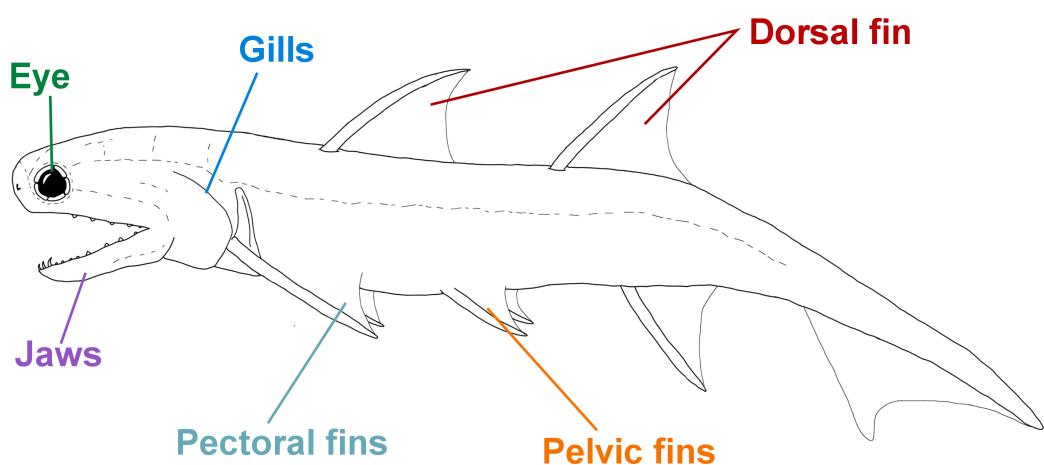


Ischnacanthus

Ish-na-can-thus

Ischnacanthus is a “spiny shark” from the Devonian period - between 420 and 360 million years ago - of Scotland, and had shark-like scales and spines in front of its fins. *Ischnacanthus* was a medium-sized acanthodian (about 15-20cm) with **jaws full of large teeth**, and would have used these to eat smaller acanthodians like *Mesacanthus*. We know this because we have the **coprolites** (fossil poo) of *Ischnacanthus* from the same place as this specimen (Tillywhandland Quarry, Scotland), which are full of smaller scales and spines.



Fossil facts

- Often the most common fossilised parts of *Ischnacanthus* are its jaws, which are often found apart from the rest of the body.
- Unlike living sharks where the teeth fall out and are replaced, in *Ischnacanthus* they are very solidly attached to the jaw. We know of different kinds of *Ischnacanthus* with teeth that are different shapes. This tells us that they were using them for feeding on different types of food.