

# Dunkleosteus: the 'destroyer' of the Devonian

Before the dinosaurs appeared, the Earth also existed many species of animals known as the notorious assassins, many of which are from the ocean and Dunkleosteus is one of them.

In the ocean hundreds of millions of years ago, there was a carnivorous fish with fangs and giant skulls, they were Dunkleosteus. With a stout body and aggressive shape, this Devonian fish deserves the nickname "exterminator" in ancient times.



In the second half of the 19th century, humanity began to discover large numbers of fossils of various ancient species, and paleontology began to grow in the United States. Many strange fossils have been found in Tennessee and Wyoming. In 1868, John Newberry relied on the fossils of the skull and lower jaw (AMNH 81) to form Dinichthys, the typical fish, Dinichthys herzeri.



For a long time after the *Dinichthys* genus was named, almost all the ancient giant fish found in North America were classified into this genus, and the genus giant is considered by scientists "landfill" in the animal sorting industry.

In 1956, paleontologist Jean Pierre Lehman discovered that the fish named *Dinichthys terrelli* in studies since 1873 was a completely new species and was different from the giant genus, so he named and distributed the other type for this fish is *Dunkleosteus*, of the genus "Dunkle".

So far, at least 10 species in the genus Dunkle (Dun) have been discovered, of which the typical species is *Dunkleosteus terrelli*. Most fossilized samples of Dun fish have been found in the United States, North America and even in Europe. Dun's face is very impressive with the shape of the skull and teeth are extremely scary.



*Dunkleosteus* is an extinct genus of anchovy, which existed in the late Devonian period, some 380–360 million years ago. Some species, such as *D. terrelli*, *D. marsaisi*, and *D. magnificus*, are among the largest species of mackerel that ever existed on Earth.

*Dunkleosteus* is a large prehistoric predatory fish. There has been a lot of controversy about the actual size of this fish, so many people think that this fish has a body length of up to 10 meters, but in fact, through analysis and simulation of the body. Figure of this fish from fossilized specimens, we know that the maximum length of

the Dunkleosteus is 6 meters and weighs nearly 1.5 tons.



Compare the size of Dunkleosteus fish to humans.

Dunkleosteus are "armored fish". Their heads and necks are covered with a fairly thick layer of bone armor. Because of this, their fossils often preserve most of the head and neck.

Covering that armor was a very glossy skin, followed by a pair of eyes growing on the sides of the head with giant sharp teeth visible from the outside.

Although they can be seen from the outside, in fact, this fish does not have teeth, what we see and consider to be teeth is essentially a part of their skeleton armor.





In the shape of an ancient fossil and a skull, this fish has a higher back, and the body must be very stout, with a large, powerful tail on the back. The solid body, the mouth possessing horrific bite force and sturdy armor made Dunkleosteus a true armored vehicle in the ocean.



Dunkleosteus lived in the late Devonian period from 380 to 360 million years ago - this is considered the golden age of fish. The prosperous development of large carnivorous fish is also considered the highlight of this period.

Fish with a similar skull and jaw structure appear quite rich, but Dunkleosteus is still considered one of the earliest jaw vertebrates in Earth's history. The bite of this species has the power of 5 tons. With this terrible bite force, sharks seem to be completely helpless before them.

Along with the extremely aggressive personality, this fish was considered to be the leading creature in the ocean food chain at that time. Dunkleosteus has also been considered a heavy assassin of the Earth since the beginning of the formation of vertebrates. With a very special structure, the head and chest are covered with skeleton like armored, Dunkleosteus is the terror of sharks and many other prehistoric marine creatures.



Research shows that Dunkleosteus has the strongest jaws of any marine species ever, equal to the power of T-rex and other modern crocodiles. "Dunkleosteus can devour anything in its environment," said Philip Anderson, a leading researcher at the University of Chicago, USA.



Fossils are found with many fish bones, and part of the remaining food of other fish. Scientists believe that Dunkleosteus regularly releases the bones of prey rather than completely digesting them. Dunkleosteus is a ferocious fish, it can eat anything encountered on the hunt, from small fish, big fish, sharks, or even their own species.



Dunkleosteus possesses a mechanism that links the four parts of the jaw between the skull, the chest shield, the lower jaw and the jaw muscles joined together, these joints move flexibly so that both jaws reach high speeds when opened and closed. They can open the function in 20 milliseconds and end the entire process of opening and closing in about 50-60 milliseconds. Dunkleosteus uses the jaw muscles to suck food, assists in capturing prey, creating high bite force when closing jaws. The pressure was so great that it could puncture or cut through cuticles or leather armor, making Dunkleosteus the most terrible predator of the ocean at the time.



For millions of years during the Devonian, Dunkleosteus is a marine creature that completely dominated the ocean world. Scientists say this terrible creature is the largest fish in the ocean during the Devonian. With their reconstructed appearance, they looked like peeled steel tanks, ready to attack the prey they were aiming at.

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