

THE EVOLUTION OF FISH, SCIENCE EDUCATION AND WHY WE SHOULD CARE

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The evolution of fish bridges a span of roughly 200 million years from early multi-cellular invertebrates through land dwelling vertebrates. During the Devonian Period or “age of fishes” many different forms of fish evolved and many interesting examples of evolutionary processes are evident in fish today including sticklebacks, cichlids, guppies, cavefish, notothenioids and others. Theodosius Dobzhansky made the famous quote: "Nothing

in Biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.” Evolution is a well-substantiated theory that has been described as the unifying concept of biology. Since Charles Darwin put forth his ideas about the theory of evolution and natural selection, acceptance has been mixed. The scientific community overwhelmingly accepts the theory; however, within the general population considerable skepticism exists. Most of this skepticism is rooted in the idea that the theory is in conflict or at least troublesome to some religious beliefs. Efforts to teach Creationism, Intelligent Design or alternatives to evolution can undermine quality science education.