

## WHY HAVE SEA FISH FOSSILS BEEN FOUND IN THE MOUNTAINS?

On the Lessini Mountains in Bolca, a mountain town in the province of Verona, there is one of the most important fossil deposits in the world of the Cenozoic Era (*Tertiary*) for fossil fish.

This paleontological area is called “pesciara di Bolca”: the term “pesciara” (“the fishbowl”) indicating the high number of fish fossils found. **In fact, about 50 million years ago, Bolca was on the edge of a large sea and its underwater landscape was similar to that of our present tropical seas.**



← **A fossil specimen of Angelfish (*Eoplatax papilio*). These are one of the most beautiful fish: they have an elongated rhomboidal shaped body, compressed at the sides; they nibbled among the corals reefs.**

↓ **A well-preserved fossil specimen of an eel (*Paranguilla tigrina*). Note the coloured spots on the skin and a small fish still intact in the stomach.**



## Did you know?

Originally, the term “fossil” meant anything that was excavated from the earth.

**This word was used in science towards the end of the 700’s, but already in 1517, Verona’s Girolamo Fracastoro (1476-1478 ca.-1553) recognized fossils as marine animals and plant species, and claimed that the mountains were formed from the sea, anticipating by some centuries the correct interpretation regarding the origin of fossils.**