

Indiana's Reef Rocks

More than 400 million years ago during the Silurian Period, countless individual reefs developed in the warm, shallow seas that covered Indiana and the surrounding states. Corals and sponge-like stromatoperoids built the reefs in broad banks across northern and southwestern Indiana along the margins of deeper basin areas centered in Michigan and southwestern Indiana and Illinois.

These reefs provide important economic resources to Indiana. In the southwest, the Terre Haute Reef Bank is buried beneath younger rocks that contain petroleum. Natural gas is also stored by utility companies in younger rocks draped over some of the more than 60 reefs in the state. In the Fort Wayne Bank area in northern Indiana, the reefs are close to the surface; more than 20 of them have been quarried for high-quality aggregate (gravel).

