Fish Vocabulary

Vertebrae each of the series of small bones forming the backbone, having several projections for articulation and muscle attachment, and a hole through which the spinal cord passes

Cold-blooded having a body temperature varying with that of the environment; poikilothermic.

Scale each of the small, thin horny or bony plates protecting the skin of fish and reptiles, typically overlapping one another

Gill the paired respiratory organ of fishes and some amphibians, by which oxygen is extracted from water flowing over surfaces within or attached to the walls of the pharynx

Omnivore an animal or person that eats food of both plant and animal origin

Carnivore an animal that feeds on flesh

Herbivore an animal that feeds on plants

Lateral Line a visible line along the side of a fish consisting of a series of sense organs that detect pressure and vibration

Dorsal Fin an unpaired fin on the back of a fish or whale, e.g., the tall triangular fin of a shark or killer whale

Anal Fin an unpaired fin located on the underside of a fish posterior to the anus

Caudal Fin another term for tail fin.

Pectoral Fin each of a pair of fins situated on either side just behind a fish's head, helping to control the direction of movement during locomotion. They correspond to the forelimbs of other vertebrates

School a large group of fish or sea mammals

Pelvic Fin each of a pair of fins on the underside of a fish's body, attached to the pelvic girdle and helping to control direction

Operculum technical term for gill cover

Spawning (of a fish, frog, mollusk, crustacean, etc.) release or deposit eggs

Swim Bladder a gas-filled sac present in the body of many bony fishes, used to maintain and control buoyancy