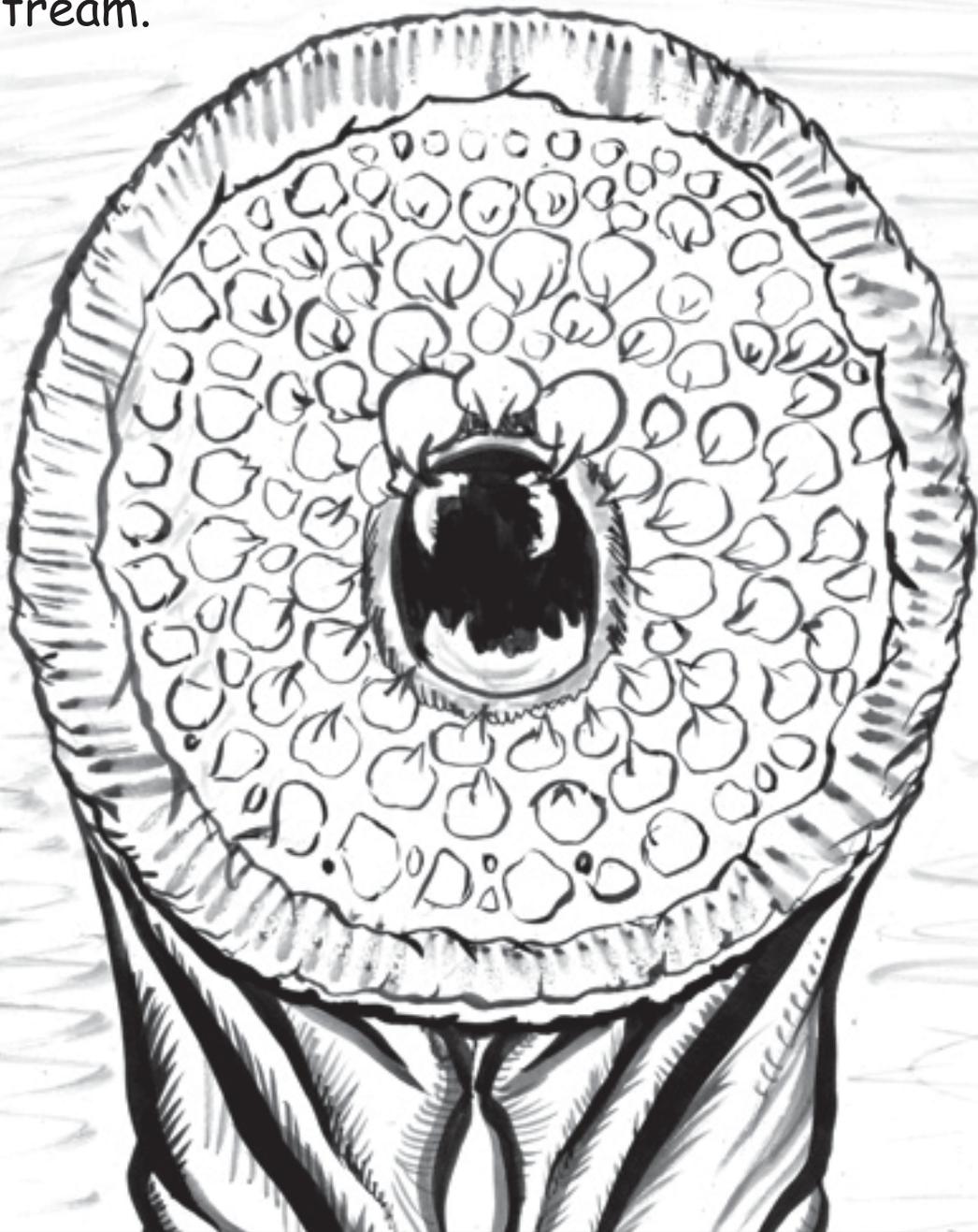


At first glance, you may think it's an eel or even a snake, but it's not. It is a Pacific lamprey. Lampreys are a very strange looking fish with their round sucking mouth and eel like bodies. This fascinating creature has no paired fins, jaws, or bones. Their unique life history is similar to the salmon who share the rivers of the Pacific Northwest.

*Lampetra tridentata* is the scientific name for Pacific lamprey. Loosely translated, it means "three-toothed stone sucker." The Pacific lamprey swims by wriggling back and forth in the water. In swift currents, they often suck onto rocks with their mouth to rest and hold fast in the current. With a burst of energy, they move upstream and attach to another rock. They continue this way upstream.



Lampreys are the oldest fish alive today with a fossil record as far back as 500 million years. Like the sturgeon, this fish has not changed much throughout the centuries. The Columbia River Basin is home to 3 species of lampreys including the Pacific lamprey, the western brook lamprey, and the river lamprey.

