

***Enchelycore nycturanus*, a new moray eel from South Africa (Teleostei: Anguilliformes: Muraenidae)**

DAVID G. SMITH

Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, MRC-159, Washington, DC 20013-7012; smith.davidg@nmnh.si.edu

Abstract

Enchelycore nycturanus, a new species of moray eel, is described from the east coast of South Africa. It has slightly arched jaws that leave some teeth exposed when the mouth is closed. It has triserial maxillary teeth, biserial mandibular teeth, and its intermaxillary teeth are in five rows. Along with the dentition, its vertebral count (147-148) and its color pattern of white spots on a dark background distinguish it from all other morays. It is known only from the type locality and may be restricted to South Africa.

Key words: Muraenidae, *Enchelycore*, South Africa, taxonomy, new species

Introduction

The Muraenidae (moray eels) is one of the most abundant and diverse of the eel families (Anguilliformes). Morays are especially common on and around coral reefs, although their cryptic habits keep them largely out of sight. Some 141 valid species are currently recognized in the Indo-Pacific (Böhlke and Smith, in press), but new species are continually being discovered. The taxonomy and classification of this family is in a state of flux, and many of the currently recognized genera are probably polyphyletic. The new species described here is placed in *Enchelycore* based on the current definition of that genus.

Methods

Counts and measurements are as in Böhlke (1989); values are given for the holotype, followed in parentheses by those for the SAIAB and USNM paratypes, respectively. Institutional abbreviations are as follows: SAIAB, South African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity, Grahamstown, South Africa; USNM, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA.