

A New Genus and Species of Congrid Eel (Teleostei: Anguilliformes: Congridae) from Western Australia

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ABSTRACT. A new genus and species of congrid eel, *Castleichthys auritus*, is described from a single specimen collected from 396 m off northwestern Australia. It belongs to the subfamily Congrinae and is characterized by a slender and flexible tail, a free flange on the upper lip, no plicae or other ornamentation on skin of head, large eye, uniserial maxillary and mandibular teeth, and conspicuous black pectoral fins. The vertebral formula is 15–36–128.

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The Congridae constitute a diverse and speciose eel family (Anguilliformes) whose members inhabit mostly continental shelf and slope waters in tropical and subtropical latitudes worldwide. Congrid eels of the Atlantic (Blache & Bauchot, 1976; Smith, 1989) and Japan (Asano, 1962) are fairly well known, but other areas have not been adequately studied. The eel described here differs from all previously known species of Congridae to such an extent that it is placed in a new genus.

Materials and methods

Counts, measurements, and abbreviations are as given in Smith (1989: 461). The holotype is deposited in the CSIRO collection in Hobart, Tasmania.

Castleichthys n.gen.

Type species. *Castleichthys auritus* n.sp.

Diagnosis. Body moderately elongate; preanal length less than 40% TL; tip of tail slender and flexible, but not greatly attenuate or filiform; pectoral fin well developed; dorsal origin slightly behind tip of appressed pectoral fin; dorsal and anal-fin rays segmented; jaws equal, rictus below middle of eye; flange present on upper lip; skin of head without papillae or plicae; eye relatively large; posterior nostril at mid-eye level. Teeth small, not caniniform or molariform; maxillary teeth uniserial, mandibular teeth uniserial for most of length.