

purplish reflections; a distinct black blotch on upper angle of opercle, extending on shoulder girdle; inside of opercle, and skin lining shoulder girdle below, largely dusky. A quadrate black blotch on back of tail, extending backwards along bases of upper caudal rays. Fins light yellowish, the dorsal and anal edged with black; tip of upper caudal lobe black. Ventrals whitish. Tongue, base and roof of mouth, and skin of upper branchiostegals black.

Abundant at Panama; recorded by Dr. Steindachner from Magdalena Bay, Lower California. The types, numbered 29165, 29278, 29285, and 29343, were collected by Mr. Gilbert at Panama. It is known to the fishermen at Panama as Orqueta.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, *November 27, 1882.*

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**DESCRIPTION OF A NEW EEL (*SIDERA CASTANEA*) FROM MAZATLAN, MEXICO.**

**BY DAVID S. JORDAN AND CHARLES H. GILBERT.**

*Sidera castanea* sp. nov.

(*Sidera panamensis* Jor. & Gilb., Bull. U. S. Fish Comm. 1882, 106; name only; not *Muraena panamensis* Steind.)

Tail about as long as rest of body, or slightly longer. Head  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in length of trunk; cleft of mouth wide,  $2\frac{1}{3}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in head; teeth everywhere uniserial or nearly so, those on sides of mandible small, compressed, close-set, subtriangular, directed backwards, about 18 in number on each side; mandible with about four large canines anteriorly; upper jaw with the teeth partly in two series, some of the teeth being movable, the others mostly stronger, canine-like, especially anteriorly. Front of vomer with two very long slender canines, behind them a single series of small teeth; teeth all entire.

Eye large, slightly nearer tip of snout than angle of mouth, its diameter 2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in snout; gill-opening one-third wider than the orbit; tube of anterior nostril short, less than half diameter of orbit; posterior nostril without tube; occiput not especially elevated, the anterior profile scarcely concave (perfectly straight in young 2 feet long).

Dorsal fin commencing much in advance of gill-opening, becoming unusually high posteriorly, where its vertical height is more than half greatest depth of body; the length of the longest ray more than greatest depth of body.

Color light brownish-chestnut, slightly paler on abdomen; no spots or bands anywhere; fins without dark margins; no dark spot on gill-opening or at angle of mouth; no black about eye; head without conspicuous pores.

The specimen here described is 44 inches in length; others about 2 feet in length agree very closely.

*Sidera castanea* is very common among the rocks about Mazatlan, where it reaches the length of about 4 feet, and is known to fishermen as *Anguila prieta*. It has not yet been observed elsewhere. The types numbered 28246, 29535, 29591, were collected by Mr. Gilbert.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, November 27, 1882.

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ON THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE GENUS *OPHICHTHYS*.

BY DAVID S. JORDAN AND CHARLES H. GILBERT.

The generic name "*Ophichthys* Ahl" has been adopted by Dr. Günther for a large group of eels, including numerous nominal "genera" of earlier writers. Whether this vast group will admit of further generic subdivision, we do not here propose to discuss. It is, in any event, divisible into subgenera, and for these subordinate groups we should adopt names in accordance with accepted rules of nomenclature. It becomes, therefore, important to ascertain what species should be taken as the type of *Ophichthys*.

As the original memoir of Ahl is not, as far as we know, in any American library, we have written to Dr. Lütken, of the University of Copenhagen, in regard to it. His answer to this letter is the source of the information given below in regard to the memoir in question. The following is the title:

I.X.Θ.Γ.Σ.

Specimen ichthyologicum de *Muræna* et *Ophichtho* quod seria exp. fac. med. Ups. præsid. Carol. Vet. Thunberg. æquite, etc.

Modeste offert.

Jonas Nicol. Ahl. 27 Jan. 1789. Upsalia.

The genus *Muræna* is in this paper divided into two, as follows:

*Muræna*.

*Ophichthus*.

"Animal apodum, pinnis ventralibus pectoralibus nullis. Membrana branchiostiga 10-radiata connata. Apertura branchiarum remota lateralis solitario."

"Animal apodum, pinnis ventralibus nullis; membrana branchiostiga 10-radiata connata. Apertura branchiarum remota lateralis ante pinnis pectoralis."