

Notes on the snake eels of the genera *Apterichtus* and *Ichthyapus* (Anguilliformes: Ophichthidae) of the Central and South Pacific, with the description of a new species

JOHN E. McCOSKER¹ & JOHN E. RANDALL²

¹California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California 94103-3098 (email:jmccosker@calacademy.org)

²Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-2704 (email:jackr@hawaii.rr.com)

Abstract

Apterichtus australis, new species, collected by dredge and rotenone in 12–100 m is described from Rapa, Pitcairn, Easter and Kermadec islands. It is closely related to *A. flavicaudus* (Snyder) but differs from it and all congeners in its high vertebral number, cephalic pore condition, and dentition. *Ichthyapus* from Easter Island and Pitcairn are recognized as *I. acutirostris* Brisout de Barneville. *Caecula* (*Sphagebranchus*) *platyrhyncha* Gosline from Hawaii is resurrected from the synonymy of *I. vulturis* (Weber & de Beaufort). First records of *I. vulturis* and *Apterichtus klazingai* (Weber) from Hawaii are reported.

Key words: Eels, *Apterichtus australis* new species, *Apterichtus klazingai*, *Ichthyapus acutirostris*, *Ichthyapus platyrhynchus*, *Ichthyapus vulturis*, Rapa, Easter Island, Pitcairn Island, Kermadec Island, Hawaii

Introduction

During expeditions to Easter Island and elsewhere in the South Pacific, the junior author made substantial collections of finless ophichthid eels that until now have defied identification. Subsequent collections that he and others have made and the examination of type specimens have made it possible to describe that material. In preparation for the junior author's upcoming treatise on the fishes of Easter Island, we herein describe *Apterichtus australis* n. sp. and have ascertained that the Easter Island species of *Ichthyapus* is *I. acutirostris* Brisout de Barneville.