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Tubefishes

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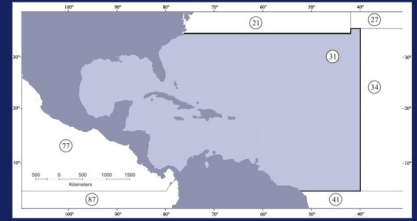
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THE LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF THE
**WESTERN CENTRAL
ATLANTIC**



Volume 2 Bony fishes part 1 (Acipenseridae to Grammatidae)



AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
ICHTHYOLOGISTS
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FOOD AND
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FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION GUIDE FOR FISHERY PURPOSES
and
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THE LIVING MARINE RESOURCES OF THE WESTERN CENTRAL ATLANTIC

VOLUME 2

Bony fishes part 1 (Acipenseridae to Grammatidae)

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with the support of the
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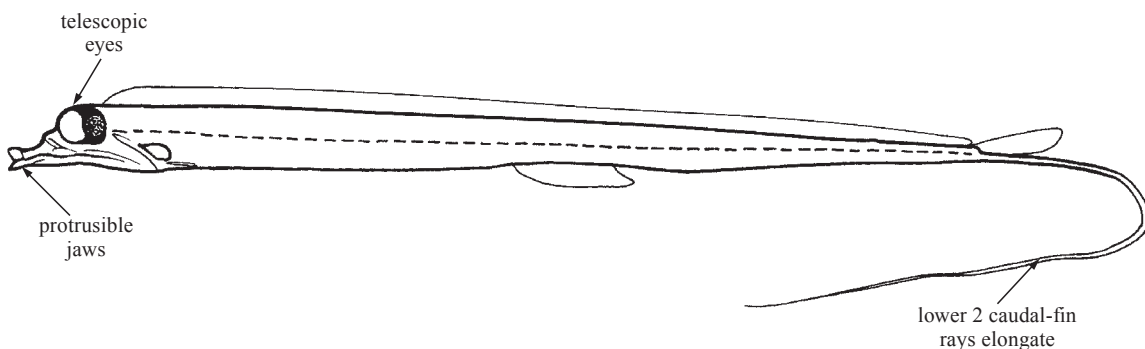
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STYLEPHORIDAE

Tube-eyes

by J.E. Olney, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, USA

Diagnostic characters: Small to moderate-sized lampridiform fishes (usually under 30 cm); body slender, elongate, somewhat compressed. **Eyes conspicuous, telescopic, directed forward and somewhat upward. Jaws highly protrusible, mouth small and tubular** (head tilted backward when jaws protruded, with a membranous pouch stretching from head to mouth, and volume of mouth cavity increasing dramatically); teeth absent. Dorsal-fin base long, extending from nape to caudal fin; first 2 dorsal-fin elements elongate, especially in small specimens; total dorsal-fin soft rays 115 to 124. Anal-fin base short, inserted at midbody; total anal-fin soft rays 14 to 17. **Caudal fin highly modified into 2 separate parts; lower-most 2 caudal-fin soft rays extremely elongate, forming a projection that equals or exceeds body length in undamaged specimens;** upper caudal-fin lobe with 5 or 6 short rays. Pectoral fins with 10 or 11 soft rays; fin base obliquely rotated. Pelvic fins inserted below pectoral-fin base, with 1 soft ray, often broken and inconspicuous. Total vertebrae about 53; first 2 vertebrae highly reduced; second vertebra without neural spine and with neural arch m-shaped. **Colour:** body silver; head darkly pigmented; dorsal fin, anal fin, and upper caudal-fin lobe may be tinted red.



Habitat, biology, and fisheries: The only known species in this family, *Stylephorus chordatus*, is meso- or bathypelagic (captured at depths of 300 to 800 m) and rare. It feeds on small crustaceans, and is thought to capture prey while swimming in a vertical, head-up position. Worldwide in tropical and temperate waters; reported to occur in surface waters of the Florida current in large numbers on rare occasions; presumably found throughout the area. Little is known of its habits or reproduction. There is no fishery for the species.

Similar families occurring in the area

None. *S. chordatus* is easily distinguished by the conspicuous telescopic eyes, protrusible jaws, and the highly modified caudal fin with extremely elongate lower fin rays.

List of species occurring in the area

Note: A single species in the family.

Stylephorus chordatus Shaw, 1791. To 32 cm, excluding elongate caudal filament. Circumglobal.

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