

Two New Species of the Previously Monotypic Congrid Eel Genera *Poeciloconger* and *Macrocephenchelys* from Eastern Australia

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ABSTRACT. *Poeciloconger kapala* n.sp. (Congridae, Bathymyrinae), described from a single 540 mm SL specimen trawled in about 50 m north of Sydney, differs from the only other species of the genus, *P. fasciatus* Günther, 1871 (tropical Indo-Pacific), in having tan body colouration and small ovoid light spots anteriorly rather than dark spots and irregular bars on a light background, generally molariform rather than sharp vomerine teeth, and fewer vertebrae (148 rather than 154–158). *Macrocephenchelys soela* n.sp. (Congridae, Congrinae), described from five specimens 259 to 298 mm SL trawled in 350 m off the north-east Queensland coast, is distinct from the unique *M. brachialis* Fowler, 1934 (Philippines, Mozambique Channel) in having a more robust rather than slender body, a more anterior dorsal origin, a larger branchial aperture, a longer snout, molariform vomerine teeth, and fewer vertebrae (150–151 rather than 179–182).

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Some 160 genera of eels (Anguilliformes) are currently recognised. Of these about one-third are monotypic, though this possibly reflects imperfect knowledge of the genera concerned on a worldwide basis rather than excessive generic splitting within the Anguilliformes generally. Monotypic genera are more a feature of the Ophichthidae (i.e. 18 out of 55) and Chlopsidae (four out of seven) though these families include many small, cryptic, fossorial forms and for that reason are almost certainly incompletely known. Judging by the diversity of their larvae, which are more accessible to collecting, further genera and species can be expected to be described in

these families. The Synphobranchidae and Congridae include rather many monotypic genera which could be explained by incomplete collecting of these generally deep water eels in many parts of the world.

This paper reports a second species of *Poeciloconger* Günther, 1871 and of *Macrocephenchelys* Fowler, 1934, two hitherto monotypic genera of Congridae. Both new species were collected on the Australian east coast, the former in shallow, inshore water north of Sydney, the latter in deeper water further to the north, off Townsville.

Poeciloconger was originally reported from an