

# Nettastomatidae

Clofnam 80

by L. Saldanha

Common name: Sorcerers (En).

Body elongate, scaleless, compressed posteriorly, tapering from anus to tip of tail. Head and snout very elongate, upper jaw with a prominent tip; anterior nostril at tip of snout, posterior nostril a hole or cleft near the eye. Teeth conical, very numerous, in bands on jaws and vomer, visible exteriorly and laterally when mouth is closed. Gill openings crescentic, lateral to ventral. Dorsal, anal and caudal fins confluent; pectoral and pelvic fins absent. Lateral line conspicuous.

Bathybenthic fishes, living mainly in holes on soft bottoms of the continental slope.

Genera 6; in Clofnam area 4.

Recent revision: Smith & Castle (1982—larvae).

## KEY TO GENERA AND SPECIES

- 1a Snout with a long fleshy projection at tip . . . . . *Venefica proboscidea* (p. 565)
- 1b Snout without a fleshy projection at tip. . . . . 2
- 2a Posterior nostril an oval hole, level with upper rim of eye; no palato-ptyergoid teeth . . . . . *Nettastoma melanurum* (p. 563)
- 2b Posterior nostril a cleft under a cutaneous fold, level with lower rim of eye; palato-ptyergoid teeth generally absent . . . . *Facciolella oxyrhyncha* (p. 562)
- 2c Posterior nostril comma-shaped near anterior rim of eye; palato-ptyergoid teeth present . . . . . *Saurenehelys cancrivora* (p. 564)

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## FACCIOLELLA Whitley, 1938 Clofnam 80.2

Posterior nostril a cleft under a cutaneous fold, level with lower rim of eye.  
See family for other general features, biology, etc.

Species 9; in Clofnam area 1.

Recent revision: Smith & Castle (1982—larvae).

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### *Facciolella oxyrhyncha* (Bellotti, 1883) Clofnam 80.2.1 Suppl.: 355

Common synonym: *Facciolella physonema* (Facciola, 1914).

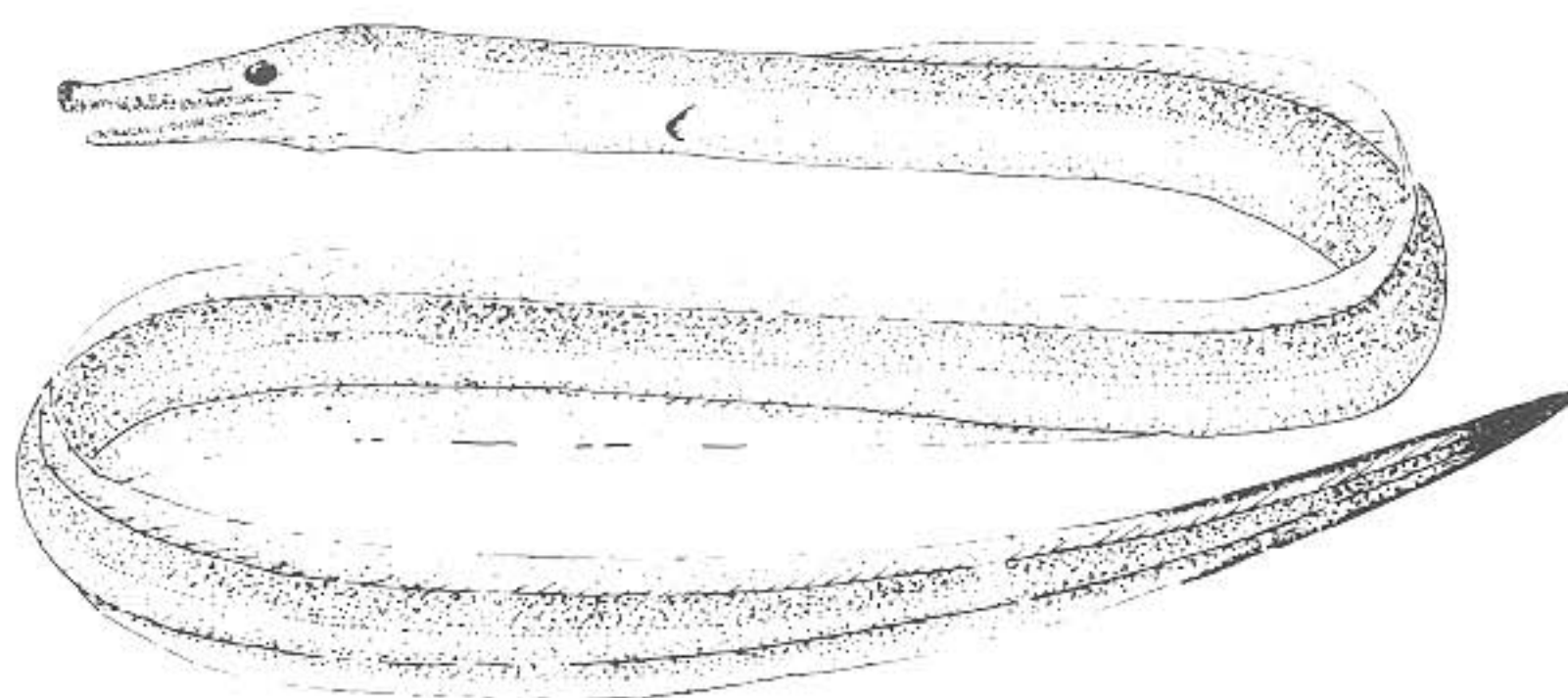
Common name: Facciola's sorcerer (En).

*Diagnosis:* body very elongate, scaleless, subcylindrical anteriorly, compressed behind anus and tapering to a point; anus at about first third of body length. Head long, anterior nostril near the top of prominent snout tip, encircled by a little collar; posterior nostril a cleft under

a cutaneous fold at level of lower eye margin. Jaws elongate, the upper with prominent tip, longer than lower, rictus below posterior eye margin. Teeth conical, in bands on jaws and vomer, only those of outer rows smaller than the others; palato-pterygoid teeth usually absent; upper pharyngeal plates lozenge-shaped, lower plates lanceolate. Gill openings crescentic, ventral. Dorsal, anal and caudal fins confluent; dorsal fin origin behind gill opening. Lateral line with 42–64 preanal pores, 7–11 before gill openings; 1 supra-temporal pore. Vertebrae: total 240–250; abdominal 46–50 (larvae 238–261 myomeres; preanal 62–67). *Colour*: silvery, particularly pronounced on back; posterior part of dorsal, anal and caudal fins with a black margin; after preservation body brownish, paler below. *Size*: to 65 cm.

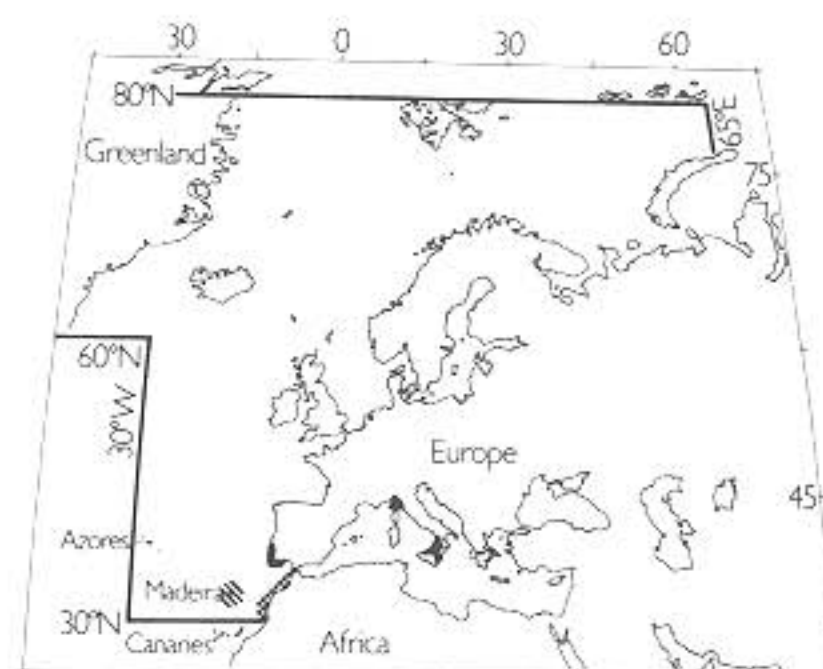


Teeth of upper jaw



*Habitat*: mainly bathybenthic down to 730 m, but occurring also in lower zone of continental shelf. Young sometimes in caves, larger specimens caught deeper. *Food*: carnivorous, mainly decapod natantia. *Reproduction*: gravid females observed practically throughout the year; larvae identified by Grassi (1913) under the name *Saurenhelys cancrivora*.

*Distribution*: Mediterranean (Ligurian and Tyrrhenian seas), eastern Atlantic to southern Portugal and Madeira. Larvae west to the Azores and south to about 28° N off African coast.



**NETTASTOMA** Rafinesque, 1810

Clofnam 80.1

Posterior nostril an oval pore, level with upper rim of eye, closed by a cutaneous flap.

See family for other general features, biology, etc.

Species 4; in Clofnam area 1.

Recent revision: Smith et al. (1981), Smith & Castle (1982—larvae).

**Nettastoma melanurum** Rafinesque, 1810

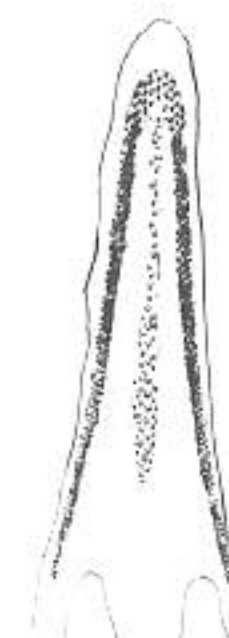
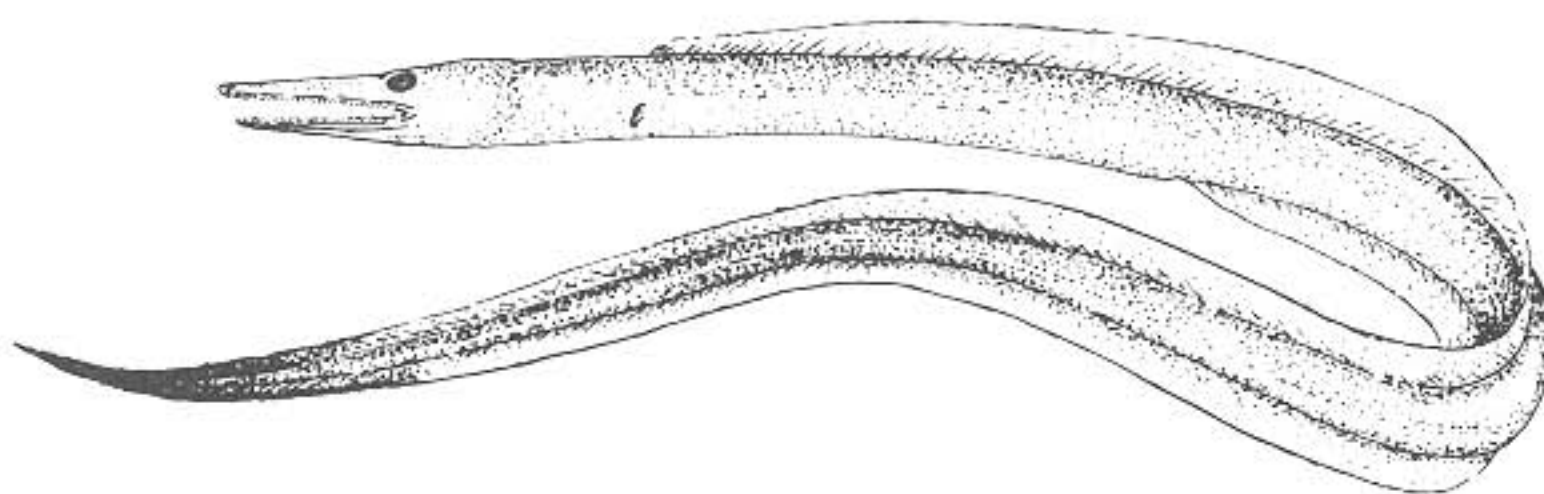
Clofnam 80.1.1

Suppl.: 355

Common synonyms: none.

Common names: Blackfin sorcerer (En), Pico de pato (Sp).



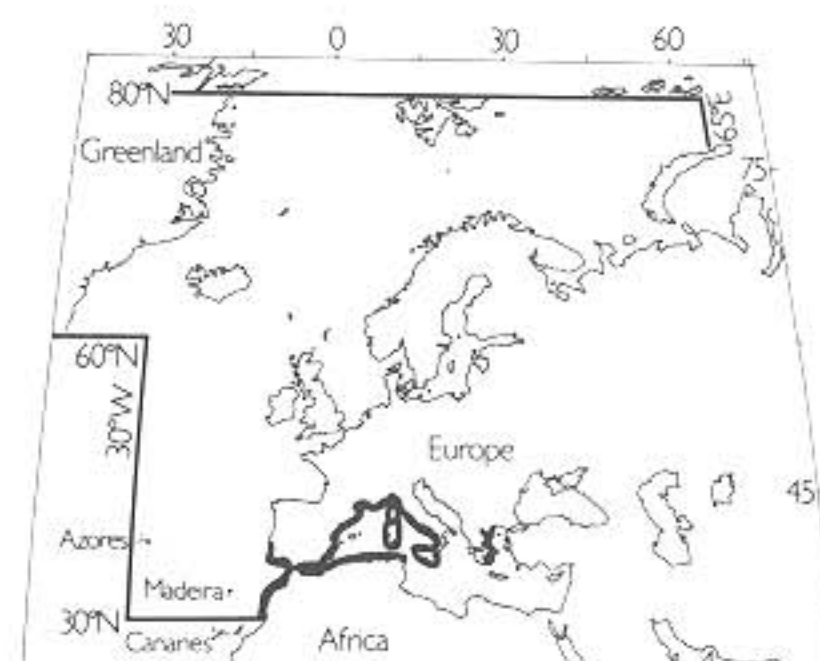


Teeth of upper jaw

**Diagnosis:** body very elongate, scaleless, cylindrical anteriorly, compressed posteriorly and tapering to a point; anus before midpoint of body. Head long; anterior nostril tubular, at base of prominent snout tip; posterior nostril an oval hole at level of upper eye margin. Jaws elongate, the upper with prominent tip and longer than lower; rictus below posterior eye margin. Teeth in bands on jaws and vomer, their size diminishing slightly from inner rows to outer ones; no palatopterygoid teeth; plates of upper and lower pharyngeal teeth of same shape and size. Gill openings crescentic, lateral. Dorsal, anal and caudal fins confluent, well developed; dorsal fin origin over gill opening. Lateral line with 43–45 preanal pores; 7–9 before gill openings; 3 supratemporal pores. Vertebrae: total 186–207 (larvae 186–211 myomeres; preanal 60–70); abdominal 56–59. **Colour:** (preserved specimens) brownish dorsally, pale whitish-brown ventrally; posterior part of dorsal and anal fins with a black margin; peritoneum black. **Size:** to 80 cm.

**Habitat:** bathybenthic, in holes on muddy bottoms of continental slope; young in upper levels. **Food:** carnivorous, mainly crustaceans. **Reproduction:** spawning in November–December in Bay of Algeria; eggs 2.4–3.0 mm diameter; leptocephali described from Mediterranean and Atlantic.

**Distribution:** western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic northward to Portugal. Elsewhere, southward to Angola. Larvae also in western Atlantic (Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean).



## **SAURENCHELYS** Peters, 1864

Clofnam 80.3

Posterior nostril comma-shaped near anterior rim of eye.

See family for other general features, biology, etc.

Species about 3; in Clofnam area 1.

Recent revision: Smith & Castle (1982—larvae).

## **Saurenychelys cancrivora** Peters, 1865

Clofnam 80.3.1

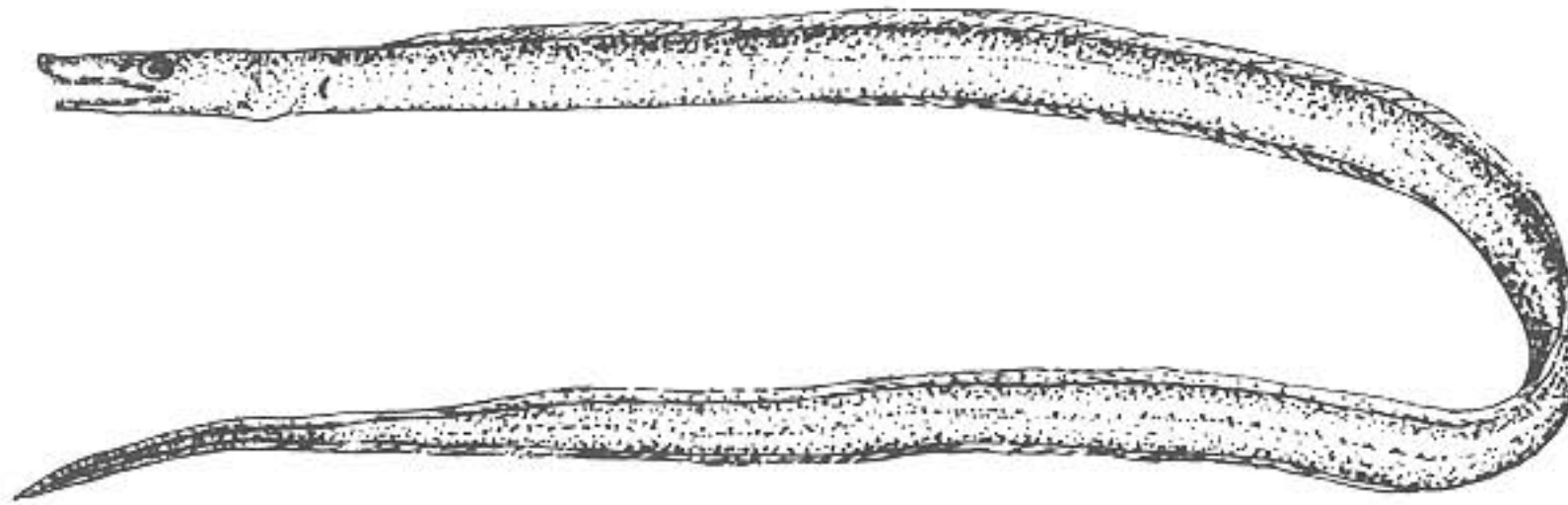
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Common synonyms: none.

Common name: Slender sorcerer (En).

**Diagnosis:** body very elongate and slender, scaleless, tapering to a point; anus in first third of body. Head rather long; posterior nostril comma-

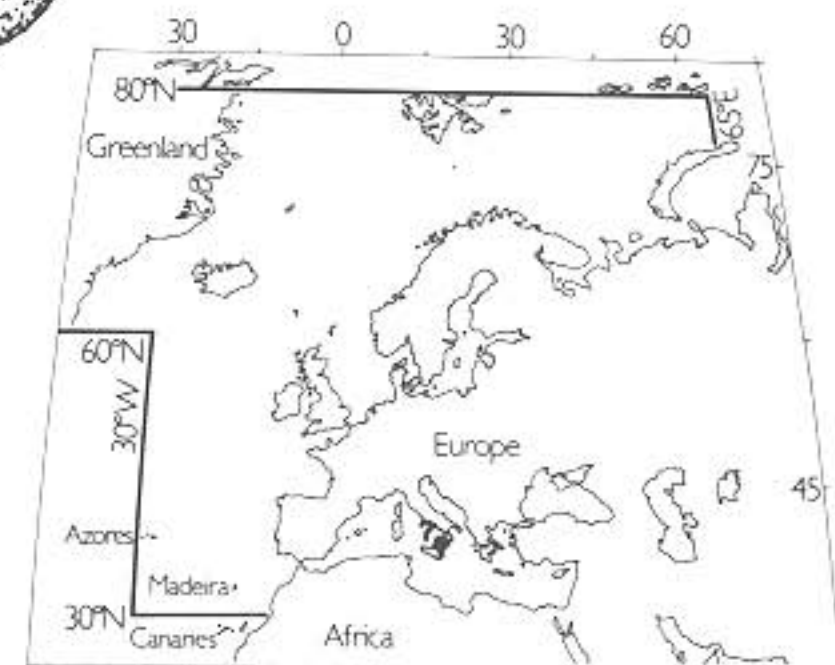
shaped, near anterior eye margin. Upper jaw with prominent tip, longer than lower; rictus below posterior eye margin. Teeth in bands, longer on inner rows of jaws and much bigger in median row on vomer; palatopterygoid teeth present. Gill openings lateral. Dorsal, anal and caudal fins confluent; dorsal fin origin behind gill opening. Lateral line with 33–34 preanal pores; 3 supra-temporal pores. Vertebrae: total 209; abdominal 54. *Colour*: creamish in preserved specimens. *Size*: to 65 cm.



Teeth of upper jaw

*Habitat*: benthic on continental slope down to 700 m. *Food*: no data. *Reproduction*: few data; leptocephali described in Gulf of Guinea (Blache, 1972, 1977), larval life about 6–8 months, but identification without satisfactory evidence (Smith & Castle, 1982).

*Distribution*: only doubtfully present in Mediterranean (leptocephali described as *L. Saurenehelys cancrivora* are in fact *Facciolella oxyrhyncha*). Elsewhere, eastern Atlantic off River Congo and northern Indian Ocean.



**VENEFICA** Jordan & Davis, 1892

Clofnam 80.4

Snout with a long fleshy projection at tip.

See family for other general features, biology, etc.

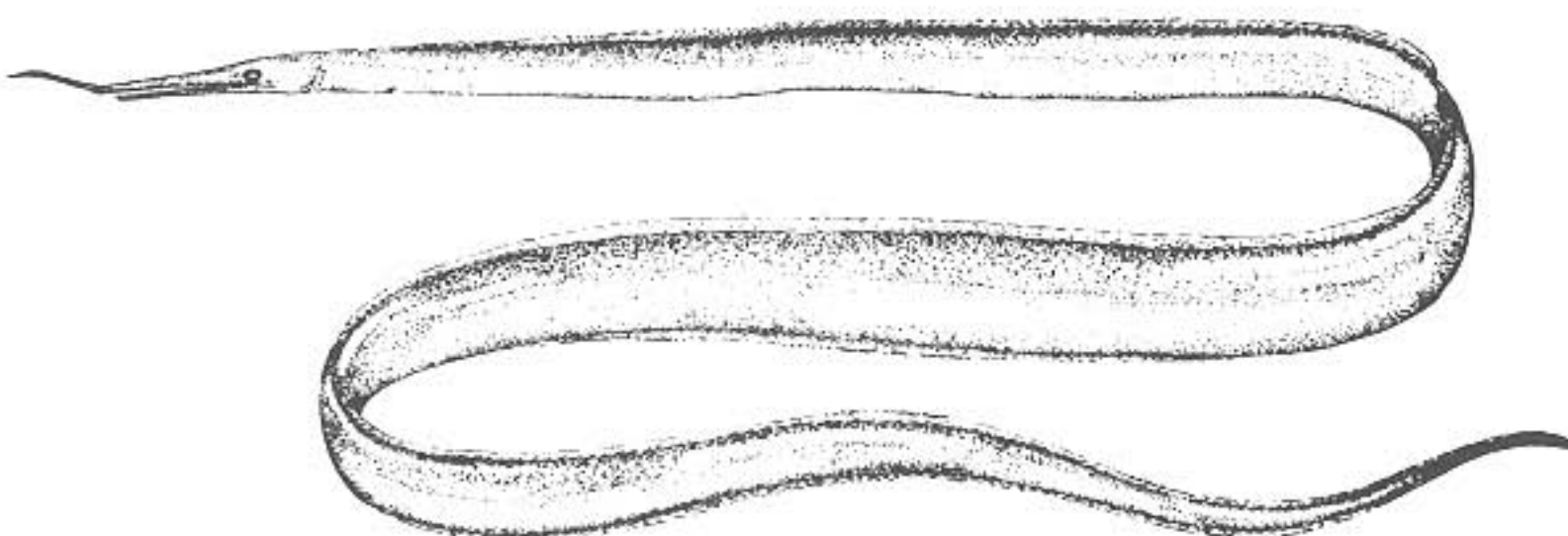
Species about 3; in Clofnam area 1.

*Venefica proboscidea* (Vaillant, 1888)

Clofnam 80.4.1

Common synonyms: none.

Common name: Whipsnout sorcerer (En).



Teeth of upper jaw

*Diagnosis:* body very elongate and slender, scaleless. Snout with a long fleshy projection at tip (at least half of snout length); anterior nostril tubular, at the base of snout tip; posterior nostril a pore in front of eye. Jaws long and slender. Teeth cardiform on jaws and vomer; premaxillary teeth larger, in a triangular patch; palato-pterygoid teeth absent. Gill openings small, subventral. Dorsal, anal and caudal fins confluent; dorsal fin origin over gill opening; pectoral and pelvic fins absent. Lateral line with 59–60 preanal pores, 8 or 9 before gill openings; supra-temporal pores. Vertebrae: total number unknown (all known specimens mutilated); abdominal 54–72. *Colour:* brownish. *Size:* to 96 cm.

*Habitat:* benthic on continental slope down to 2,000 m. *Food:* no data.

*Reproduction:* no data.

*Distribution:* eastern Atlantic, from Morocco to South Africa. Elsewhere, northern Indian Ocean.

