

The Humpback Anglerfish

Family: The family Melanocetes does not have a variety of species and only has five genus. The males are short and small. All the females in this family have a short body, a large mouth, long teeth, and an illicium. The illicium is the "fishing rod" that protrudes from between the eyes, or the snout. The bioluminescence is a result of symbiosis with bacteria. The rare light in the deep ocean attracts smaller creatures, therefore luring them near the angler's mouth. Some examples of animals from the family are Murray's Abyssal Anglerfish, *Melanocetus eustalus*, *Melanocetus niger*, and *Melanocetus rossi*.

Adaptations: The humpback anglerfish is a peculiar creature. It lives up to 6,600 feet beneath the surface of the ocean. Their black or red color makes them almost invisible in the dark waters. The anglerfish has an illicium which helps them get food. It attracts whatever the anglerfish eats to its mouth, and even though the anglerfish is adapted to see, it provides light. Also, they have a highly dispensible stomach which allows them to swallow prey larger than them.

Movement: The humpback anglerfish wobbles slowly through the deep sea because of its round, wide body. It uses its short, but useful fins to get to food or mates.

Physical Characteristics: The humpback anglerfish may look scary, but despite its frightening appearance, the female only grows to about 20cm. The male anglerfish, whose appearance is completely different from the females', is significantly smaller than the female. Its maximum length is 3cm. It does not have long teeth or an illicium like the female does, but a thin body with no special features.



The Female Humpback Anglerfish - Murray's Abyssal Anglerfish



The Male Humpback Anglerfish - *Melanocetus eustalus*



Metabolism: The main diet of the humpback anglerfish consists of many types of fish. They eat batfish, marine snails, worms, cepopods, crustacea, and arrow worms.

Reproduction: The male anglerfish spends his whole life searching for a mate. When he finds one, he uses his hook-like teeth to attach himself to the female's skin. When he bites into her, he lets go of an enzyme. This enzyme dissolves the skin of his mouth and fuses him to the female. Once the male is attached, he stays on for the rest of his life. He slowly starts to lose his internal organs and his body, and becomes a "parasite" on her side. The "parasite" releases its sperm into the female. The female lays her eggs in a thin sheet of gelatinous material from two to three feet wide and approximately 30 feet long. When the larvae hatch, they rise to the surface and feed on

plankton. As they begin to mature, they go back to the depths of the ocean.

Males and Females: The female and male anglerfish are very different in many ways. The female anglerfish can be 17cm longer than the male, and has a more frightening appearance. The female has an illicium which she uses to attract food to her mouth, but the male does not.

Sources:

Pictures are linked with sources.

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/angler-fish-facts.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_seadevil

<http://tolweb.org/Melanocetus>

<http://www.animalpicturesarchive.com/view.php?tid=3&did=26078>

http://www.enotes.com/topic/Black_seadevil