

*Aphyonus.*

*Aphyonus*, Günth., Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., 1878, vol. ii. p. 22.

Head, body and tapering tail strongly compressed, enveloped in a thin, scaleless, loose skin. Vent far behind the pectoral in nearly the middle of the total length. Snout swollen, projecting beyond the mouth, which is wide. No teeth in the upper jaw; small conical teeth in the lower, pluriserial in front and uniserial on the side. Vomer with a few rudimentary teeth; palatine teeth none. Nostrils close together, small. No externally visible eye. Barbel none. Ventrals reduced to simple filaments, placed close together, and near to the humeral symphysis. Gill-membranes not united. Four branchial arches, the posterior without gill-laminæ; the anterior with very short gill-rakers and with rather short gill-laminæ. Head covered with a system of wide muciferous channels and sinuses, the dermal bones being almost membranaceous, whilst the others are in a semicartilaginous condition. Notochord persistent, but with a superficial indication of the vertebral segments (as in some Leptocephaline forms).

Although this fish resembles *Typhlonus* in so many points that one might be induced to regard it as an early stage of development of that fish, no such direct relation can obtain between them. The single individual obtained by the expedition has the ovaries fully developed, filling one-half of the abdominal cavity, the ova being apparently mature and ready for exclusion. It is, therefore, a persistent and independent type, the lowest of all Anacanthus, so far as is known at present, which has remained stationary at an early stage of its development. The abdominal organs do not show any peculiarity, and are very similar to those of *Typhlonus*.

*Aphyonus gelatinosus* (Pl. XXVI. fig. A).

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The head, in the preserved specimen, is compressed, rather deep, and enveloped in loose skin; especially on the upper side of its anterior half the skin forms a large loose bag, which, during life, is probably filled and distended with mucus.

The snout overlaps the wide mouth, the maxillary extending backwards nearly to the middle of the length of the head. A rudiment of the eye, in the shape of a minute black globular body, is hidden below the skin in a recess of the infraorbital mucous sinus, as in *Typhlonus*. Seen from above, the head appears convex, rather broad; its length is less than its distance from the vent and one-fourth of the total.

The body is strongly compressed and deep, its depth at the beginning of the dorsal fin being one-third of the distance of the vent from the snout; also the tail is deep and short, shorter than the rest of the body. The skin covering the muscular parts is not loose, very thin, transparent, so that the myocommas can be clearly seen through it.