POLYPTERUS NILOTICUS.

CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Membr. branch, uniradiata.

Pinnæ dorsales numerosæ.

Gen. Zool. 5. p. 122.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS, &c.

Polypterus viridis, abdomine nigro maculato.

Gen. Zool. 5. p. 122.

Polyptere Bichir.

*Geoffroy Ann. Mus. Hist. Nat.
vol. i. p. 57. pl. 5.*

Polypteron Niloticum primus technice et accurate descripsit Dominus Geoffroy ; qui auctor est, medium quoddam esse vinculum inter pisces osseos et cartilagineos. Si faciem universam spectes, ad genus *Esox* videtur accedere ; ad illas præcipue species quæ squamis præduris et veluti osseis instruuntur. Forma longa est et quasi serpentina, capite longis laminis munito, corpore fere cylindrico, squamis duris cooperto. Longus est piscis circiter octodecim uncias. Color thalassinus, abdomine pallidiore. In flumine Nilo generatur, ibique molli sub limo latere solet. In optimis habetur piscibus Niloticis ; caro quippe sapida est et tenera. Cutem ægre cultro penetrabilem mos est totam evertere, pisce prius cocto.

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THE
NILOTIC POLYPTERUS.

GENERIC CHARACTER.

Gill-membrane single-rayed.

Dorsal fins numerous.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

Green Polypterus, with the abdomen spotted with black.

Polyptere Bichir.

Geoffroy. Ann. Mus. Hist. Nat.
vol. 1. p. 57. pl. 5.

This remarkable fish seems to have been first scientifically described by Mons. Geoffroy, who considers it as forming a kind of connecting link between the osseous and cartilaginous fishes. In point of general affinity, it seems most allied to the genus *Esox* or Pike, and especially to such species as are furnished with strong or bony scales. Its shape is long and serpentiform, the body nearly cylindrical, the head defended by lengthened bony plates, and the body covered with large and strong scales. Its usual length is about eighteen inches, and its colour sea-green, paler, or whitish on the abdomen. It is an inhabitant of the river Nile, where it is observed to reside in the soft mud, and is considered as one of the best of the Nilotic fishes, having a tender and savoury flesh; and as it is difficult to open the skin with a knife, it is usual to boil the fish first, and afterwards draw off the skin whole.

Shaw, George. 1812. "Polypterus niloticus, The Nilotic Polypterus [Pl. 1027]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 24(CCLXXVIII), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322307>.

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