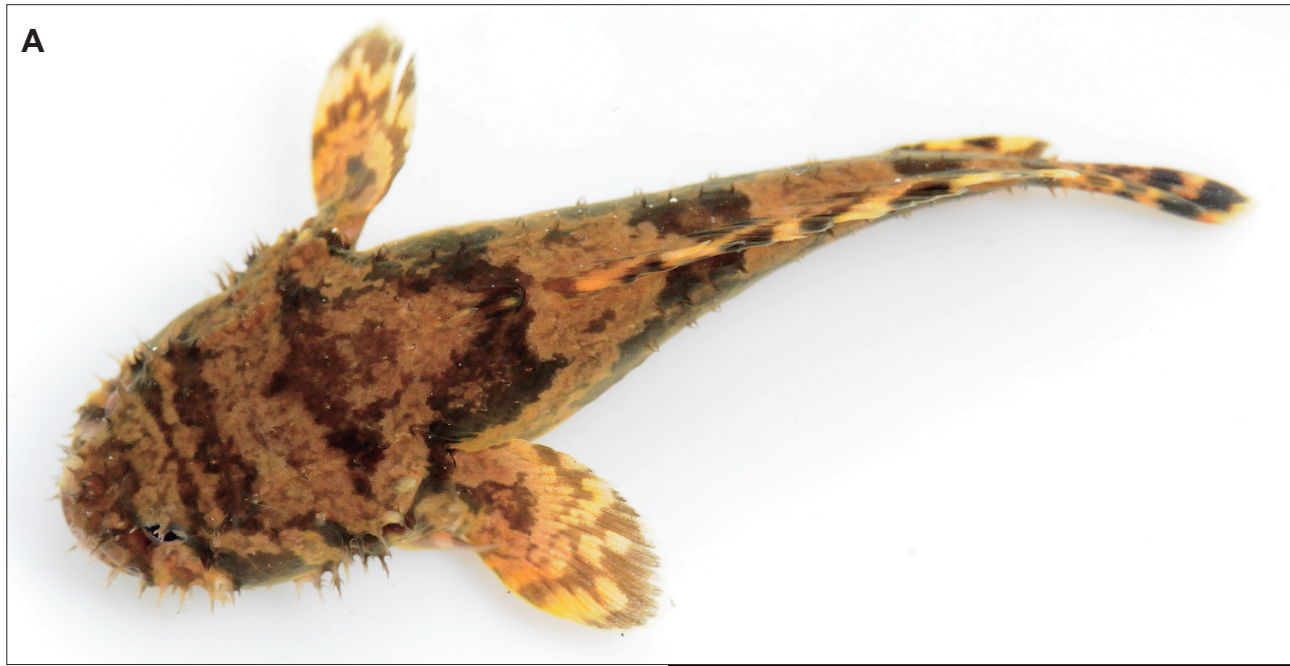


BATRACHOIDIFORMES – toadfishes

Batrachoidiformes comprises only a single family Batrachoididae. The family includes 3 subfamilies, viz., Batrachoidinae, Porichthyinae, and Thalassophryinae; these subfamilies, except for the Batrachoidinae, are known only from the Americas. In Western Central Pacific, 7 species of the Batrachoidinae are known (Greenfield, 1999).

Most of the toadfishes of the Batrachoidinae are similar-looking, drab-colored fishes, having a broad and depressed head with numerous short barbel-like dermal processes, pelvic fins in front of the pectoral-fin base, 3 strong spines on the first dorsal fin, and no scales on the body (some have small cycloid scales).



Allenbatrachus grunniens (Linnaeus, 1758)

Family: Batrachoididae (FC: 226)

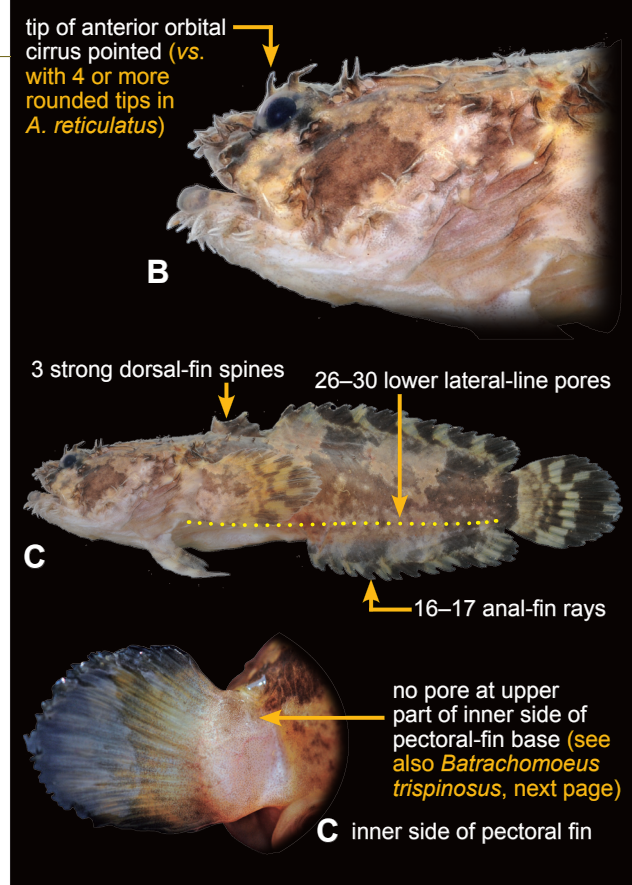
Size: 19.1 cm SL (Greenfield, 1999: 2001).

Distribution: Mekong Basin in Vietnam (and ?Cambodia); Indo-West Pacific.

Notes: A medium-sized species of toadfishes, found in brackish estuaries and the adjacent freshwater areas of large rivers; it appears to be the most common toadfish species in the Mekong.

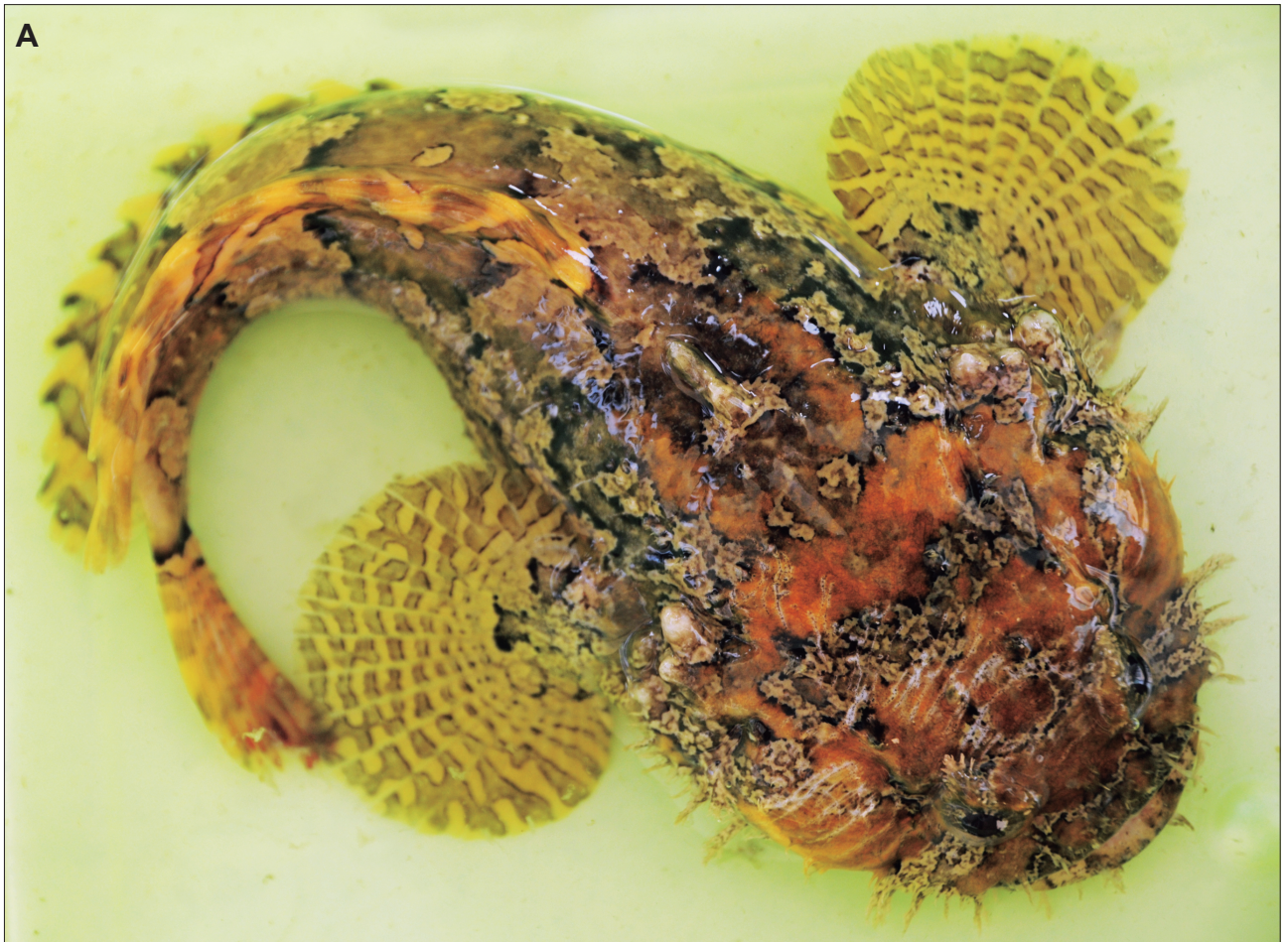
At least 3 species of toadfishes are known from the Mekong (e.g., Rainboth *et al.*, 2012: 75): *Allenbatrachus grunniens*, *A. reticulatus*, and *Batrachomoeus trispinosus*. *Allenbatrachus* resembles *Batrachomoeus* in general appearance, but lacks a pore at the upper part of the pectoral-fin axil (inner side of the pectoral-fin base) (vs. a pore is present in *Batrachomoeus*). Although we failed to confirm *Allenbatrachus reticulatus* during our field surveys in this region in 2007–2013, *A. reticulatus* can be distinguished from the congener *A. grunniens* by having blunt and rounded teeth on the jaws (vs. teeth are pointed in *A. grunniens*) and an anterior orbital cirrus with 4 or more rounded tips (vs. tip pointed) (Greenfield, 1997, 1999).

Rainboth (1996b: 170) also recorded the other toadfish *Halophryne diemensis* from the Mekong, and noted, "fairly common in the tidally influenced part of the lower Mekong." His record of *H. diemensis* needs confirmation; actually, latter he did not include the record of *H. diemensis* in the annotated list on fishes of the "Greater Mekong Ecosystem" (Rainboth *et al.*, 2012). *Halophryne diemensis* is similar to fishes of *Allenbatrachus* in having no pore at the inner side of the pectoral-fin axil, but has non-projecting lower jaw (vs. slightly projecting beyond the upper jaw in *Allenbatrachus*), distinct longitudinal skin ridges on the dorsal surface



of the head (vs. absent), 14–15 anal-fin rays (vs. 16–17), and 33–37 lower lateral-line pores (vs. 23–30) (Greenfield, 1997, 1999).

A and D) CTU-P-5385 (photo: KS); B and C) CTU-P-1537 (photo: LXT)



Batrachomoeus trispinosus (Günther, 1861)

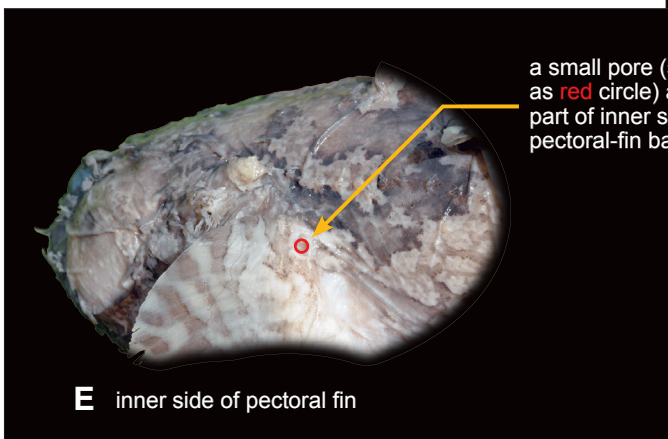
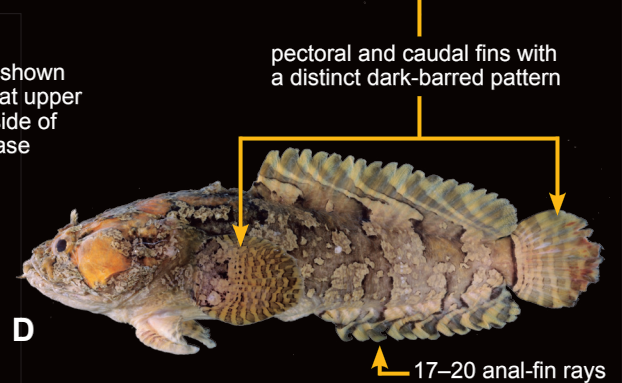
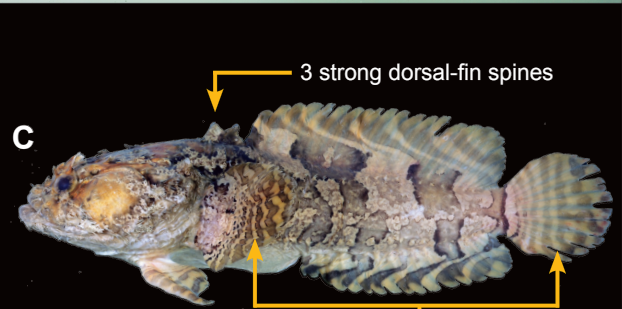
Family: Batrachoididae (FC: 226)

Size: 26.2 cm SL (Greenfield, 1999; 2002).

Distribution: Mekong Basin in Vietnam (and ?Cambodia); Western Pacific.

Notes: A medium-sized species of toadfish, found in reefs and brackish estuaries; also commonly seen in fish tanks of seafood restaurants in Vietnam and Cambodia. The photographed specimens shown here were taken from the fish tank of a restaurant in Cần Thơ, Vietnam.

Batrachomoeus trispinosus is readily distinguished from the other toadfishes in the Mekong by having a small pore at the upper part of pectoral-fin axil (inner side of pectoral-fin base) (see photo E). See also similar-looking, common toadfish *Allenbatrachus grunniens*, left page.



E inner side of pectoral fin

a small pore (shown as red circle) at upper part of inner side of pectoral-fin base

3 strong dorsal-fin spines

pectoral and caudal fins with a distinct dark-barred pattern

17–20 anal-fin rays

A and D) CTU-P-4088 [photo: KS (A) and LXT (D)]; B, C, and E) CTU-P-4087 [photo: LXT (B and C) and KS (E)]