



Questions? Feel free to contact me at [christy@REEF.org](mailto:christy@REEF.org)

## Caribbean *Elacatinus* Species – Cleaner and Sponge Gobies

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### Neon Goby (*Elacatinus oceanops*)

Electric blue body stripe from eye to base of tail. No snout markings. Cleaner. Up to 2"

Distribution: Georgia to Florida to Gulf of Mexico only, NOT found balance of Caribbean or in the Bahamas

Habitat: Rock, coral, occasionally outside of sponge, aggregate in cleaning stations

Photo by: Paul Humann



### Caribbean Neon Goby (*Elacatinus lobeli*)

Electric blue body stripe from eye to base of tail, bordered by faint gray to pale borders. No snout markings. Cleaner. Up to 2"

Distribution: Belize to Honduras (including offshore islands) only. Does not overlap with "regular/northern" Neon Goby (*E. oceanops*).

Habitat: Rock, coral, occasionally outside of sponge, aggregate in cleaning stations

Photo by: Paul Humann



### Sharknose Goby (*Elacatinus evelynae*)

Yellow V marking on snout (can be bright or pale), continues in stripes along length of body to tail. Color of stripes vary by region – can be bright yellow, pale yellow to white, or blue. Cleaner. Up to 1.5"

Distribution: Bahamas to Southern Caribbean. NOT reported Cayman Islands.

Habitat: Rock, coral, outside of large sponges

Photo by: Paul Humann



### Cleaning Goby (*Elacatinus genie*)

Bright yellow V marking on snout, continues to wide white to yellow stripes along length of body to tail. Width of stripe is uniform. Cleaner. Up to 1.75"

Distribution: Bahamas and Cuba only. NOT reported Florida or balance of Caribbean.

Habitat: Living coral heads, rock substrate, outside of large sponges

Photo by: Wolfram Sandar



### Cayman Cleaning Goby (*Elacatinus species CI*)

Bright yellow V marking on snout, continues from eye to tail as a narrow lower stripe with white stripe above. Cleaner. Up to 1.5"

Distribution: Cayman Islands only

Habitat: Rock, coral, rubble, outside of large sponges

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Broadstripe Goby (*Elacatinus prochilos*)**

White Y marking on snout, continues to tail as wide white to blueish stripe to tail. Cleaner. Unlike previous species, upper lip protrudes at tip of snout (not underslung). Cleaner. Up to 1.75"

Distribution: Mexican Caribbean, Belize, Jamaica, Lesser Antilles. NOT reported balance of Caribbean.

Habitat: Surface of living coral and outside of sponges

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Yellownose Goby (*Elacatinus randalli*)**

Bright yellow bar on snout (snout can be pale or dark). Yellow stripe extends from eye through tail on each side. Thin bright blue line under yellow stripe, from eye to pectoral fin (this blue distinguishes it from Yellowprow). Cleaner. Up to 1.75"

Distribution: SE Caribbean, Lesser Antilles to Venezuela to Aruba. NOT reported balance of Caribbean, Florida, or Bahamas

Habitat: Living Coral

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Yellowprow Goby (*Elacatinus xanthiprora*)**

Bright yellow bar on dark snout. Yellow stripe extends from eye through tail on each side. No blue on belly (as in similar Yellownose). Up to 1.5"

Distribution: North Carolina to Florida to Gulf of Mexico. Not reported balance of Caribbean.

Habitat: Sponge dweller

Photo by: Paul Humann

No Picture ☹️

**Slaty Goby (*Elacatinus tenox*)**

Similar in appearance to Yellowprow but yellow stripes only go part way down the body. Body is slate gray. Very shy and restricted in habitat, rarely seen. Up to 1.5"

Distribution: NE to SW Caribbean

Habitat: Only found within Touch-me-not Sponge (*N. nolitangere*) on deeper reefs (15–70m).



**Colin's Sponge Goby (*Elacatinus colini*)**

Bright yellow bar on dusky snout. Bright yellow stripe extends from eye to tail, can fade to white or remain yellow. Up to 1.5"

Distribution: Belize and Honduras only

Habitat: Tube sponge dweller (inside and outside). Sometimes found on coral or in cracks. Shy.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Barsnout Goby (*Elacatinus illecebrosus*)**

White bar on snout that is slightly teardrop shaped. Wide white to blue stripes extend from eye to tail (stripe is sometimes yellow). Cleaner. Up to 1.75"

Distribution: Mexican Caribbean and Coastal Central America (including offshore islands). NOT reported balance of Caribbean, Florida, or Bahamas.

Habitat: Coral dweller, often many individuals on one coral head. Also found on rock and mangrove roots.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Linesnout Goby (*Elactinus lori*)**

Thin white to blue bar on dark snout. Thin blue stripe runs from eye to tail (snout and body stripes on similar Barsnout Goby much thicker). Up to 1.75"

Distribution: Belize and Honduras only

Habitat: Sponge dweller

Photo by: Florent Charpin



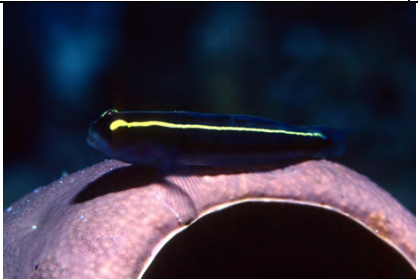
**Spotlight Goby (*Elacatinus louisae*)**

Distinct marking centered on nose, can be bright yellow to white. Marking is often a round spot, but can be elongated marking like Yellowprow and Yellownose. Thin yellow to white stripe from eye to caudal peduncle (stripe ends in a dark bulge before tail – distinguishing it from Yellowprow and Yellownose). Up to 1.5"

Distribution: Bahamas to NW Caribbean. NOT reported Florida or S Caribbean.

Habitat: Inside and around large tubular sponges, prefer deeper reefs

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Yellowline Goby (*Elacatinus horsti*)**

Yellow stripe extends from eye to tail, typically with no markings on snout. Body can be dark to dusky. Juveniles have incomplete stripes (and can be confused with Shortstripe Goby). Up to 2"

Distribution: Bahamas to Southern Caribbean. NOT reported Cayman Islands.

Habitat: Inside large tubular sponges and large barrel sponges

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Cayman Sponge Goby (*Elacatinus centralis*)**

Similar in appearance to Yellowline Goby. Yellow stripe extends from eye turning bluish-white toward tail. No markings on snout. Body can be dark to dusky. Juveniles have complete stripes. Newly described, not in book. Up to 2"

Distribution: Cayman Islands only

Habitat: Inside large tubular sponges and large barrel sponges

Photo by: Mark Rosenstein



**Shortstripe Goby (*Elacatinus chancei*)**

Short bright yellow stripe extends from each eye to above pectoral fin. No markings on snout. Up to 1.5"

Distribution: Bahamas to SE Caribbean. Distribution is apparently exclusive of, but complementary to, the distribution of Yellowline Goby.

Habitat: Inside large tubular sponges

Photo by: Paul Humann

**Other Endemic / Restricted Range Species**

Blacknose Goby (*Elacatinus atronasus*) - The Bahamas

Jarocho Goby (*Elacatinus jarocho*) - SW Gulf of Mexico

Serranilla Goby (*Elactinus serranilla*) - Serranilla Bank, Jamaica, Hispaniola

Nicaraguan Goby (*Elacatinus species N*) - Nicaragua

Providencia Goby (*Elacatinus species P*) - Providencia Island Honduras