

***Taenioides kentalleni*, a new species of eel goby from Saudi Arabia (Gobiidae: Amblyopinae)**

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Abstract

A new species of eel goby, *Taenioides kentalleni*, is described on the basis of a single specimen from Ras Az Zawr, Jubail, Saudi Arabia. It differs from other species of *Taenioides* by the following combination of characters: 35 caudal vertebrae; 72 dorsal-fin elements, 65 anal-fin elements, median fins edged in black and the caudal fin almost entirely black. This species is figured and compared with other nominal species of *Taenioides*.

Key words: eel goby, *Taenioides*, Amblyopinae, Gobiidae, new species

Introduction

Gobies of the genus *Taenioides* (Gobiidae: Amblyopinae) are also known as eel gobies, which alludes to their attenuated body shape. Eel gobies are burrowers in intertidal areas and mangrove swamps from the east coast of Africa eastward to Fiji. Due to their burrowing habits, specimens of *Taenioides* are not common in collections and individuals are normally not observed or caught by fishers. *Taenioides* is diagnosed among Gobiidae by its possession of a Y-shaped, second anal fin pterygiophore (Birdsong *et al.* 1988). In 1998, a single specimen of *Taenioides* not fitting any published descriptive account was collected from an exposed mudflat on the east coast of Saudi Arabia at Ras Az Zawr Bay by Kent Allen, who spent much time searching for additional specimens in the same area without success. The objective of this paper is to describe this species as new and compare it with congeners.

Methods for counts and measurements followed Murdy and Shibukawa (2001). The methods of Birdsong *et al.* (1988) were used in describing the relationship between the spinous dorsal fin pterygiophores and the underlying vertebrae. Institutional abbreviations are as listed in Leviton *et al.* (1985). Standard length (SL) is used throughout.