



That Face That Face That **Wonderful** Face!

Fishinar 11/4/2014, Jonathan Lavan – Instructor

The top 12 Blennies you will find in the Caribbean.

(all photos courtesy of ReefNet unless otherwise indicated)

Blennies 101- We will look at three out of the four types of blennies tonight: Scaly Blennies; have scales and a single dorsal fin, Tube Blennies; live in abandon worm tubes, have no scales and have a single high front dorsal fin and lateral line and Combtooth Blennies; no scales but a single dorsal fin and lateral line. Most blennies are small (1 to 3 ins.) and use their long, separate heavily filamented ventral fins to perch on the bottom (gobies perch on shorter fused ventral fins). While resting and swimming, blennies tend to curve and flex their bodies in contrast to gobies, which hold their bodies stiff and straight. Almost all blennies have fleshy appendages, called cirri, above their eyes and often snouts and napes. Males and females of some species can vary greatly in appearance. Many blennies seem to exhibit busy/fussy behavior and have eyes that can move independently making them easy to personify.

- **Saddled Blenny**- 1.5 to 2.25, Up to 2.5 in. Four dark, triangular body bars form “saddles” across back (uncommonly lower portion or all body bars are faint or absent). Dark bar on tail base. Usually one to four diagonal bands on lower head and gill cover.



- **Diamond Blenny** – 1.5 to 2.25, Up to 2.5 in. Black to dark blue ocelleted spot near front of dorsal fin. Dusky triangular saddle markings on back and diamond markings on side.



- **Redlip Blenny** – 2.5 to 4.5, Up to 5 in. Dark blunt reddish brown head. Large red lower lip. Usually up on top of reefs flitting from spot to spot.



- **Spinyhead Blenny**– 0.75 to 1, Up to 1.25 in. Numerous compact relatively short papillae on nape of equal height give top of head a “crew cut” appearance. Cirri above eyes may be branched but not bushy. Yellow-green “goggle” eyes. Formally Secretary Blenny.



- **Secretary Blenny**– 0.75 to 1.5, Up to 2 in. Red to orange to yellow patch on nape with thick, rather tall papillae of unequal length. Cirri above eyes long, slender and branched, but not bushy. Blue spots on upper lip. Formally Christmas Tree/Punk Blenny.



- **Roughhead Blenny**- 0.75 to 1.25, Up to 1.5 in. Bushy branched cirri above each eye. Short knobby spines on nape give a rough appearance. Iris orange. Male: Ocellated black spot on foredorsal fin. Female: Never have ocellated black spot on foredorsal fin. Usually much lighter in color, yellow to white.



- **Southern Smoothhead Glass Blenny**- 0.5 to 1, Up to 1.25 in. Lack cirri above each eye. Females foredorsal fin slightly elevated, males not. Formally the Darkheaded Blenny the male’s head will be black when in its nuptial phase.



- **Arrow Blenny** – 1 to 1.5, Up to 2 in. drifts with tail “cocked”. Long pointed mouth and snout.



- **Wrasse Blenny** – 2 to 3.5, Up to 4 in. Black spot on foredorsal fin begins behind third ray and does not extend to body. Large mouth extends to below eye. Mimics juvenile Bluehead Wrasse.



- **Molly Miller** – 2.5 to 3, Up to 4 in. Fringe of comblike cirri (usually red and white banded) on top of head. Cirri above eyes form fanlike branches. Usually in shallow water with plenty of surge.



- **Hairy Blenny**- 2.5 to 6 in, Up to 8.5 in. Dark, round ocellated spot on gill cover bordered by thin white to orange ring that can be solid or series of spots. Large fanlike cirrus behind each eye and a row of similar cirri across rear nape.



- **Seaweed Blenny** – 2.5 to 3, up to 3.5 in. Pale blue vertical line markings (occasionally netlike) down snout, over upper lip and below eyes. Large cirri above eyes usually have three or four branches. Usually dark spot behind eye.



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