

# Tubenose Goby

(*Proterorhinus semilunaris*)

The tubenose goby is a small, bottom-dwelling invasive fish. Native to rivers and estuaries of the Black and Caspian sea basins, it was first discovered in North America in the late 1980s in the St. Clair River, north of Windsor, Ontario. Since then it has been found in a few locations in the Great Lakes. Researchers believe that tubenose goby were brought to North America in the ballast water of ocean-going ships.

Masthead photo: Erling Holm, Royal Ontario Museum

Tubenose goby prefer waters near the shores of lakes and rivers, where they can hide among aquatic plants. The goby eats the young of bottom-dwelling fish such as rainbow darters (*Etheostoma caeruleum*) and northern madtoms (*Noturus stigmosus*). It also competes with them for food items, such as insects, shellfish and worms. Another invasive fish, the round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*), was introduced to Ontario. Unlike the tubenose goby, the round goby has spread throughout the Great Lakes and now threatens native fish populations.

## Range

Outside its native range, the tubenose goby is most abundant in the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair. It is also found in Lake Erie, in Lake Superior at Thunder Bay, Ontario, and in Duluth Harbor, Minnesota. The fish has occasionally been sighted in the St. Lawrence River near Kingston, and in Lake Huron.



Tubenose goby. Photo: United States Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office

## Impacts of Tubenose Goby

It's not yet known how tubenose goby may affect native species, but scientists are concerned about the possible long-term effects of the fish's choice of habitat and diet.

- Tubenose goby eat bottom-dwelling fish and compete with them for food.

- The fish may also eat and compete for food with other fish species that spawn in near shore areas of lakes and rivers.
- While round goby eat the invasive zebra and quagga mussels, tubenose goby do not.

To prevent the spread of this invasive species, the Ontario government has banned the possession of live tubenose goby, including its use as a baitfish.

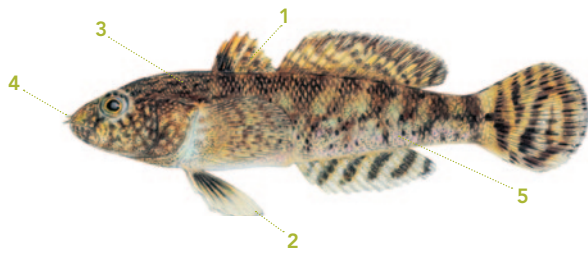
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Right: Small, bottom-dwelling tubenose goby.  
Photo: John Lyons, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



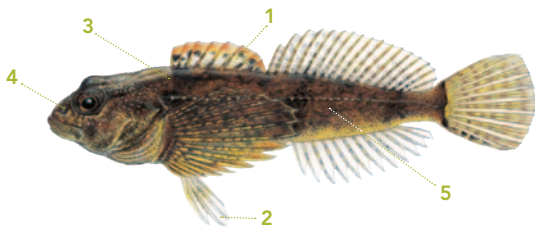
### Round Goby

- 1 Prominent black spot.
- 2 Fused scallop-shaped pelvic fin.
- 3 Body is brownish or olive in color, with dark brown spots. Except in reproducing males, the body and fins are almost completely black.
- 4 Nostril tubes do not reach the upper lip.
- 5 Fully scaled body.



### Tubenose Goby

- 1 No black spot.
- 2 Fused scallop-shaped pelvic fin.
- 3 Body is grey, light brown, olive or tan with black or reddish-brown mottling on the back.
- 4 Small nostril tubes extend over the upper lip.
- 5 Fully scaled body.



### Sculpin

- 1 No black spot on dorsal fin.
- 2 Two separate pelvic fins.
- 3 The body has a mottled color pattern with a cream colored belly.
- 4 Nostril tubes do not reach upper lip.
- 5 Sculpins have no scales.

Illustrations: Joe Tomelleri

## What You Can Do

- Learn how to identify tubenose goby and how to prevent the spread of this unwanted species.
- Never buy or use tubenose goby as bait. It is against the law to use tubenose goby as bait or to have a live tubenose goby in your possession.
- Don't put any live fish into Ontario lakes, rivers or streams.
- If you have any information about illegal importing, distribution or sale of tubenose goby, report it immediately to the Ministry of Natural Resources TIPS line at 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667) toll-free any time, or contact your **local Ministry of Natural Resources office** during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).
- If you've seen a tubenose goby or other invasive species in the wild, please contact the toll-free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or visit [www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com) to report a sighting.



Tubenose goby has small nostril tubes that extend over the upper lip.  
Photo: Lynda Corkum, University of Windsor

### Other Resources:

[www.invasivespeciescentre.ca](http://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca)  
[ontario.ca/invasivespecies](http://ontario.ca/invasivespecies)  
[www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com)

### For More Information:

Please contact the  
Invading Species Hotline at  
1-800-563-7711.

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