



## Two new species of *Elacatinus* (Teleostei: Gobiidae) from the Mexican coast of the Gulf of Mexico

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### Abstract

Two new species of gobies (Teleostei: Gobiidae) were recently discovered off the coast of Veracruz, Mexico in the southwestern Gulf of Mexico. *Elacatinus jarocho* **sp. nov.** can be diagnosed from other species in the genus by the disjunct yellow lateral stripe restricted to the head and caudal fin base, the yellow medial stripe on the snout, and the black ovoid to rectangular spot at the base of the caudal fin, immediately ventral to the yellow dash. This species forms shoals in the water column close to rock and coral reefs, feeding presumably on zooplankton, a trait shared by only one other species in the genus. *Elacatinus redimiculus* **sp. nov.** can be diagnosed from other species in the genus by the distinct reddish orange blotches or broken bands on the head and 13 reddish orange to dark brown stripes between the pectoral and caudal fins. Both species are currently known only from the southwestern Gulf of Mexico from reefs within the Veracruz Marine Park off the coast of Veracruz, Mexico.

**Key words:** Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Ocean, reef fish, new species, goby

### Introduction

The teleost family Gobiidae comprises the largest family of marine fishes worldwide (Nelson 1994), and gobies are the numerically dominant fishes associated with Neotropical coral and rocky reefs (Robertson 1998). In the Neotropics, one of the largest genera of gobies is *Elacatinus* Jordan with two subgenera, *Tigrigobius* Fowler and *Elacatinus* (Hoese 1971; Eschmeyer 1998). (We distinguish between the genus and subgenus *Elacatinus* with *sensu lato* [*s.l.*] and *sensu stricto* [*s.s.*], respectively.) The subgenus *Tigrigobius* has five nominal species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (but see Hoese & Reader 2001 for a suggested synonymy) and seven species in the western Atlantic Ocean. In contrast, the subgenus *Elacatinus* has only a single species in the eastern Pacific, but 15 species are found in the western Atlantic. Together, the 22 western Atlantic species of *Elacatinus* (*s.l.*) are distributed variously from Bermuda and the coast of the southeastern United States, southward throughout the Bahamas and Caribbean Sea, to the reefs and offshore islands of Brazil (Böhlke & Robins 1968; Colin 1975; Sazima *et al.* 1997; Colin 2002; Guimarães *et al.* 2004). However, the genus is notably depauperate in the Gulf of Mexico, with only three species, *E. oceanops* Jordan, *E. xanthiprora* (Böhlke & Robins) and *E. macrodon* (Beebe and Tee-Van), previously reported. Recent faunal surveys performed during 2003–2005 in the Veracruz Marine Park of Mexico, along the southwestern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, revealed two new species of *Elacatinus*, one from each subgenus, both of which are described here.