



## Gobiid fishes of the genus *Bryaninops* from the Red Sea, with description of two new species and two new records

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### Abstract

Three species of the gobiid fish genus *Bryaninops* were previously known for the Red Sea: *B. natans*, *B. ridens*, and *B. yongei*. Two new species are described, *B. discus*, similar to *B. loki*, differing in coloration and in having dish-like instead of cup-like pelvic fins in adults; and *B. spongicolus*, closely related to *B. dianneae* from Fiji, distinct in having shorter pelvic fins, a rounded instead of truncate caudal fin, and differences in life color. *Bryaninops loki* and *B. tigris* are reported as first records for the Red Sea, the former from a specimen from Sudan and an underwater photo from the Sinai Peninsula, the latter from an underwater photo taken off Egypt.

**Key words:** Gobiid fishes, Red Sea, *Bryaninops*, new species, new records

### Introduction

The small fishes of the Indo-Pacific gobiid genus *Bryaninops* Smith are usually found as commensals on benthic invertebrates, especially corals (both scleractinian and hydrozoan), gorgonians and antipatharians. Their pelvic fins are adapted for clinging to their host species, which may be found in areas of strong current. The lower pectoral-fin rays are usually thickened to assist in adherence. Larson (1985) reviewed the genus, reporting nine species, of which six were described as new. Larson (1987) added a tenth species, *B. nexus* (unusual, along with *B. natans*, in being able to hover a short distance above their commensal coral). Only three of the ten species of *Bryaninops* were reported by Larson from the Red Sea, *B. yongei* (Davis & Cohen), *B. ridens* Smith, and *B. natans* Larson. Herler & Hilgers (2005) published a well-illustrated synopsis of seven genera of small gobies from the Gulf of Aqaba. Included were notes on the morphology, coloration, and ecology of the three Red Sea species of *Bryaninops*.

We describe here two new Red Sea species of *Bryaninops*. In addition, we report *B. loki* Larson from the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and *B. tigris* Larson from an underwater photograph taken by Sven Kahlbrock at Hurghada, Egypt.

### Material and methods

Fin-ray branching, number and distribution of the scales, teeth and the cephalic sensory system are described from preserved material stained with cyanine blue solution. In the description of *B. discus*, data for the holotype are given first, followed by data for the paratypes, when different, in parentheses.

Lengths of specimens are given as standard length (SL), measured from the median anterior point of the upper lip to the base of the caudal fin (posterior end of the hypural plate); body depth is measured at the anus; head length is taken from the most anterior point of the snout to the upper attachment of the opercular membrane, and head depth and head width are maximum measurements; orbit diameter is the greatest fleshy diameter, and interorbital