

By Paul Kay

# Gobies

About 400 or 500 species of fish have been 'found' in Ireland's inshore waters (although quite a lot are deep sea species which have wandered away from the deeper offshore waters and some are rare visitors). Of these some 20 or so belong to the family gobiidae – better known as gobies.

## Black Gobies – *Gobius niger*

Black Gobies sometime appear in small groups. The males often have a black blotch at the top and front of the dorsal fins (on their back) which can be easily seen here (right). They can 'sit upright' using fins underneath them and along their sides to help them balance.



Photos courtesy of Paul Kay



## Fries' Goby – *Lesuerigobius friesii*

Fries' Gobies live in burrows in sandy/muddy seabeds. They can be seen, like this one (left), sitting at the entrance to their burrow watching what is going on. If disturbed they turn tail and disappear into their burrows.

## Leopard-spotted Goby

– *Thorogobius ephippiatus*

Leopard-spotted Gobies are to be found in crevices on rocky seabeds. They are pretty fish, and aptly named, especially when all their fins are displayed when swimming like in this photo (right).



## Jeffrey's Goby – *Buenaia jeffreysii*

Jeffrey's Goby is a goby found on sandy seabeds, although it tends to like places with some pebbles and shells, under which it hides. Males of this species can have an iridescent blue colour on their dorsal fin and grow up to about 6cm long when fully grown. (Iridescent colours are colours that change in different lights.)

## Red-mouthed Goby – *Gobius cruentatus*

The Red-mouthed Goby is regarded as being rare, although it has now been found in various places around south and west Ireland. It is known from Lough Hyne, Ireland's marine reserve in County Cork, where it is easy to spot from its red mouth!



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