

The Crested Goby (*Lophogobius cyprinoids*): an “Underwater Hound” from Florida

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With a “cheeky” face like a chipmunk and the wise demeanor of an old basset hound, the crested goby (*Lophogobius cyprinoids*) is an absolute joy to keep in the home aquarium.

Native to Bermuda, Florida, and the Bahamas to central and northern South America, the crested goby prefers tidal creeks, mangroves and other quiet, fresh to fully saline coastal waters. Crested gobies are also known to frequent canals and other slow-moving waterbodies throughout southern Florida.

In captivity (fresh or salt water), these intelligent gobies with magnificent fan-like fins typically spend the day lazily wandering along the bottom keeping in close range of their territorial hiding spot or cave. Tankmates that venture too close to the goby’s staked-out boundaries are swiftly chased away.

Once acclimated to the aquarium, these extremely hardy fish will eat just about anything that passes by. Despite their size (up to six inches), the crested goby is a great addition to the community aquarium. While it will eat small fish, faster swimmers over an inch in length are typically not on its menu. I’ve kept mine with bluefin killies and rummynose tetras with nary a problem.

Keeping these “underwater hounds” well fed makes them quite docile. They readily take frozen foods, ghost shrimp, tadpoles, crayfish, dried bloodworms, peas, and small mosquitofish (*Gambusia*).

Much like man’s best friend, each goby soon recognizes and greets its master when approaching the tank. They are not the least bit shy and feed from your hands in no time, quickly snatching the food and swiftly returning to their “spot” to consume their meal in peace.

Upon closer observation, the subtle markings of this handsome fish can be appreciated. Bluish-green spots accent rosy cheeks with small red to maroon spots speckled throughout

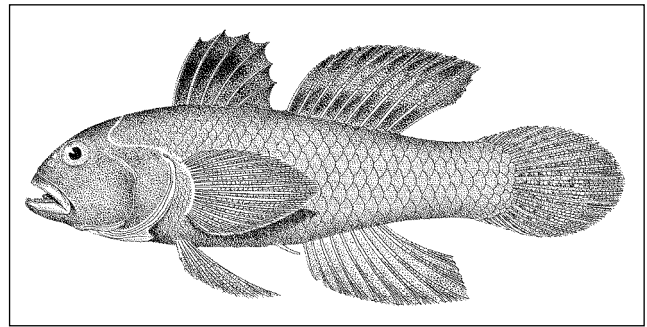


Fig. 1.

Crested goby, *Lophogobius cyprinoids*. Illustration by A. H. Baldwin, collected by Professor Poey in Cuba (No. 37509, U.S.N.M.). Courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Division of Fishes.

their large, transparent fins. Bright aquarium lighting is a plus.

Little is known about spawning in captivity and I have yet to give them a go. The female is easily recognized by a bright orange square located on her dorsal fin. Males are typically darker in coloration. Known for their unique crest at the top of their head, both sexes take on a marbled appearance that becomes darker and more pronounced during feeding or when defending territory.

The crested goby is one of my favorite native tropical species. Although they are rare to non-existent in the hobby, these fish are quite content in the home aquarium. They can be kept with others of their own kind as long as they are housed in an adequately sized tank. They prefer a temperature range of 70-85°F, which makes them suitable for a large variety of community tank settings. 🐟