

## SPECIES OF THE WEEK



Tompot Blenny

*Parablennius gattorugine*

The tompot has a clown-like face with big lips and prominent eyes. It is large for a blenny, usually growing to about 20-30 centimeters in length. It has branched head tentacles and a long dorsal fin separated into two halves by a shallow notch. The front half of the fin has stiff, spiny rays, while the back half has smaller, softer rays. The tompot is mottled brown in colour with darker bars running down its side.

Every tompot blenny has unique facial markings, making each one different from the last. The Tompot is quite a docile fish and can easily be approached if no sudden movements are made. They appear to be more active at dawn and dusk, and are very territorial. Underwater photographers are big fans of the tompot because of its habit of posing propped up on its pelvic fins.

The tompot feeds on small crustaceans, prawns and sea anemones, and prefers shallow, rocky waters. Younger fish tend to be closer to the shore between alage. They breed in the Spring. The male tompot guards the female's eggs until they reach the larval stage, which can take around one month. During this time the male can become very territorial, and will often engage in fights with other tompots.

Did you know that there was a mid-1990s indie/folk band named Tompot Blenny?