

GUNNEL AND PRICKLEBACK CARE

SOP # = Ostei6

PURPOSE: To describe methods of care for gunnels.

POLICY: To provide optimum care for all animals.

RESPONSIBILITY: Collector and user of the animals. If these are not the same person, the user takes over responsibility of the animals as soon as the animals have arrived on station.

IDENTIFICATION:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Identifying Characteristics
Penpoint gunnel	<i>Apodichthys flavidus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- These gunnels often have a dark bar across and below the eye- Sometimes a row of dark spots along the lateral side- They can be green, wine-red or golden brown depending on which type of algae they eat- They reach a maximum length of 46cm 

Crescent gunnel	<i>Pholis laeta</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- These are variously coloured- Distinctively marked with a series of crescent-shaped markings along the top of each lateral side- These gunnels reach a maximum length of 25cm 
Saddleback gunnel	<i>Pholis ornata</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- There are a series of U- or V-shaped markings along the top of each lateral side- They are olive or orange in color- Reach a maximum length of 30cm 

<p>Rock prickleback</p>	<p><i>Xiphister mucosus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These fish have dark bands with light centre that radiate from the eyes - These are sometimes confused with the black prickleback which has the reverse eye pattern, being black bands with thin, white edging that radiate from the eyes - The rock prickleback is up to 58cm long 
<p>Black prickleback</p>	<p><i>Xiphister atropurpureus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are dark purple or black in color - Dark bands with white margins radiating from the eyes - A distinct white vertical bar at the base of the tail fin - Can be easily confused with the rock prickleback (above) - Black pricklebacks can reach 30cm in length 
<p>Ribbon prickleback</p>	<p><i>Phytichthys chirus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These fish are a very pale olive green-brown colour - Very muted eye banding - Small white spots along the lateral line at the tail end of the animal - Up to 20 cm long

<p>Mosshead warbonnet</p>	<p><i>Chirolophis nugator</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commonly hide under rocks or empty giant barnacle shells - They have cirri (tentacle-like projections) on the head - Are usually a mottled brown and pale tan colour with black spots on the dorsal fin. - They can be up to 15cm in length. 
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CAPTURE:

<p>Location</p>	<p>Exclusively shallow marine and intertidal, gunnels are found in the Deer Group Islands, Dixon I., Scott's Bay, off the Blowhole, along Grappler Inlet and at the Harbor mouth across from Aguilar Pt.</p>
<p>Methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gunnels and pricklebacks are very difficult to catch as they writhe and slip away very easily. - A fine-meshed dip net is a great help when collecting.
<p>Transport</p>	<p>**Please follow transport and handling of fish SOP.</p>

ANIMAL CARE:

Holding Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fish should be held in continually flowing seawater- Water should be aerated- Lids are necessary- These fish feel extremely exposed without shelter, shelter such as marine plants and rocks will decrease stress levels.
Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Gunnels feed on various types of algae- Pricklebacks feed on various types of plants and may also occasionally take tiny crustaceans- Both gunnels and pricklebacks will eat very small chopped up fish or mussels.
Tank Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Once every 2-3 weeks, fish should be removed from the tank and placed into a holding bucket with air- The tanks should be drained and the sides and bottom should be scrubbed and rinsed with warm freshwater- The tanks should then be rinsed with cold seawater and allowed to refill, and the gunnels replaced.
Daily Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Ensure water is flowing into the tank at a reasonable rate.-Ensure the standpipe is in place and not blocked.-Check for and remove dead animals.-Check for and remove any uneaten prey organisms.-Check for and remove foreign organisms.
Animal Return	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Animals should be returned to the site of their collection- Be sure to have well oxygenated water in bucket that they are being returned in- If any anesthetic chemical has been used on the fish during its holding at BMSC, the animal must not be released before the drug withdrawal time. Withdrawal time should be on the label of an anesthetic in degree-days or 'ATUs' (degree-days are the accumulated thermal units for a given day. One day at 10C is degree-days)