



Australian Government



Native Fish Strategy

FISH FACTSHEET: FLAT-HEADED GALAXIAS (MURRAY JOLLYTAIL)



Scientific Name

Galaxias rostratus Klunzinger, 1872

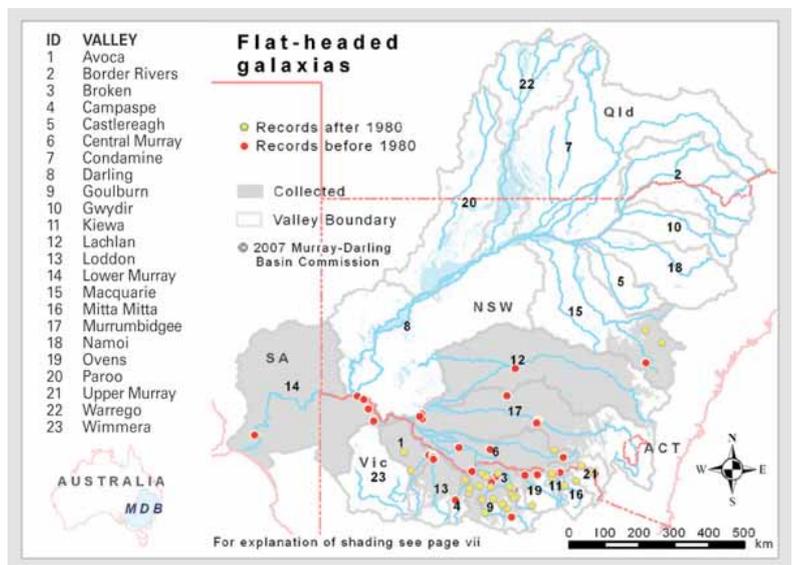
photo by Gunther Schmida

CONSERVATIONS STATUS

Declining.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The Flat-headed galaxias is only known from the southern Murray-Darling Basin where it has been recorded patchily. It is known in NSW from the billabongs and main channel of the upper Murray (near Albury) and a variety of habitats in the mid to lower Murrumbidgee River. There is also an isolated record from a lagoon near Bathurst. The species was not collected



during the NSW Rivers Survey of 80 sites across the State between 1994 and 1996 and has recently been proposed for listing as a threatened species. There is an old record from the Lower Murray in SA and the species is known from the Goulburn, Loddon, and Murray catchments in Vic. Even at sites where it was known to be common historically, it was a difficult fish to adequately sample, but there is little doubt that it has declined across its range. It does not occur in the ACT or Qld.

IDENTIFICATION

A small fish with a forked tail and small pectoral fins. Maximum size 146mm; rarely exceeds 100mm. The anal fin originates directly below the dorsal fin. The back and sides are olive-green and the belly silvery. The fins are colourless but pigment spots are often present at the base of the fin rays. The dorsal fin originates almost directly above the anal fin, but the anal fin has a longer base than the dorsal. The top of the head is flattened and the jaws are equal or the lower jaw is slightly protruding, and the gill covers are silvery. The mouth is very large with the gape extending to well below the eye.

BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

Little is known of the ecology of Flat-headed galaxias other than aspects of its reproduction. Historically, it was collected from a variety of habitats including billabongs, lakes, swamps and rivers, usually in still or slow-flowing waters. It is a schooling species that congregates in mid-water. It spawns August-September when water temperatures are above 10.5°C. Fecundity increases with increasing fish length: an 86mm fish has 2,300 eggs and a 136mm fish 7,000 eggs. The eggs are round, demersal and slightly adhesive, with egg diameters between 1.3 and 1.6mm. Eggs are spawned randomly and settle on the bottom, hatching in 8-9 days. At hatching, the larvae are 5.7-8.1mm in length. Individuals probably mature in their first year, at lengths around 80mm. The reproductive organs of ripe individuals are large, and can make up about 20-40 % of total body weight.

The diet is predominantly aquatic insects with some microcrustaceans. Movement requirements are unknown, but there is a suggestion they may school and move upstream in November-December.

POTENTIAL THREATS

Possibly competition or predation from introduced species such as Redfin perch, trout and Eastern gambusia. River regulation (cold-water pollution and altered flow regimes) may also impact this species. The effects of the Climbing galaxias-which has been transferred to inland waters via the Snowy Mountains Scheme-on natural galaxiid populations is unknown, but competition or displacement of the remnant Albury population is possible.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Allen et al. 2002;
- Kennard et al. 2001;
- Koehn & O'Connor 1990;
- Lintermans & Osborne 2002;
- Llewellyn 1971, 2005;
- McDowall & Fulton 1996;
- Merrick & Schmida 1984;
- Morris et al. 2001.

PDF LINKS

Fishes of the Murray-Darling Basin: An introductory Guide;
<http://mdba.gov.au/files/publications/MDBA-Fish-species-book.pdf>

First published - January 2009

Murray-Darling Basin Authority

GPO Box 1801 Canberra ACT 2601

Tel 02 6279 0100 Fax 02 6248 8053

www.mdba.gov.au

