



Australian Government



Native Fish Strategy

FISH FACTSHEET: HYRTL'S TANDAN (HYRTL'S CATFISH, YELLOW-FINNED CATFISH)



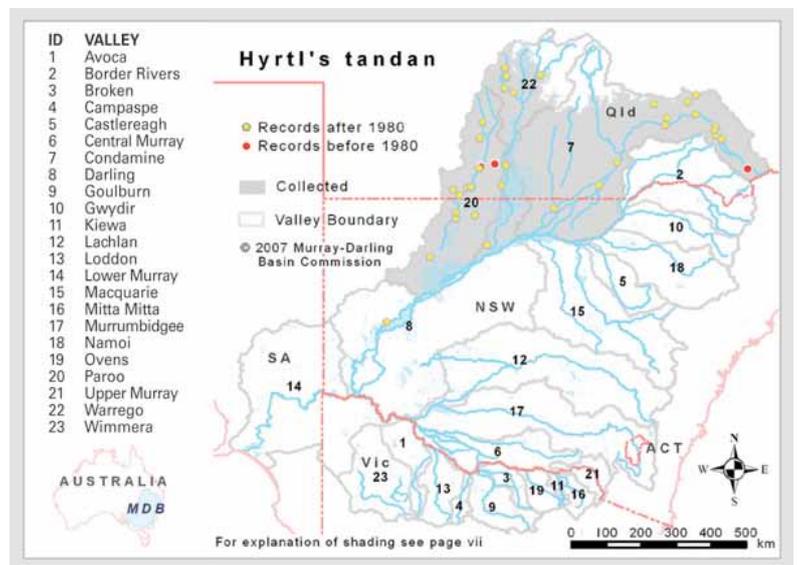
Scientific Name

Neosilurus hyrtlii Steindachner, 1867

photo by Gunther Schmida

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The species is widespread in northern and central Australia in WA, the NT and Qld, but occurs in the Murray-Darling Basin only in the north, having been recorded from the Paroo, Warrego and Condamine rivers in northern NSW and Qld, and also the Menindee Lakes.



IDENTIFICATION

A medium sized catfish with a small, moderately high first dorsal fin and the classic tandan feature of conjoined caudal and anal fins. Maximum size → 400mm and 2kg; usually less than 280mm. The skin is smooth, with no scales. The body is slender and the tail roundly pointed. The head and nape profile is straight and the eyes are further back along the head than in Rendahl's tandan. The nasal barbel barely reaches beyond the eye, and the other barbels reach to the gill opening. Colour ranges from dark brown-grey to a pale yellowish brown dorsally, paling on the sides to whitish on the belly. Small specimens may be silver on the sides with yellow fins. Breeding individuals are bright silvery-white on the sides with bright yellow fins. Individuals from very turbid waters are dull grey.

BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

Virtually nothing is known of the ecology of Hyrtl's tandan in the Basin, and the following information is drawn from studies elsewhere. The species occurs in a variety of habitats, including flowing waters or still areas such as billabongs and lagoons. Individuals may mature in their first year, (~135mm length), but most females probably mature in their second year. Longevity is unknown, but it is thought that fish may live for up to 5 years. Spawning occurs during the summer wet season in northern populations, and is thought to be stimulated by increasing water levels and possibly temperature. Details of the spawning site are unknown, but may be in sandy areas in the upper reaches of streams. Fecundity is little known, however, a 205mm female had 3,630 eggs of ~1.3mm diameter. The eggs are non-adhesive, demersal and 2.6mm in diameter when water hardened. Hatching occurs after about 60 hours at 26-27°C.

The species appears to be tolerant of low dissolved oxygen and high turbidity, but probably not of low temperatures, with water temperatures below 8-12°C not being conducive to survival in this species. It is a nocturnal, benthic carnivore, consuming small prey items such as aquatic insects, (chironomids, caddisflies, mayflies), microcrustaceans, molluscs (small bivalves) and some detritus. Movement patterns of Basin populations are unknown, but in coastal Queensland it has been recorded in spring/summer moving upstream through tidal barrages, mainly at night. Upstream migration by adults to small tributary streams is presumably associated with spawning.

POTENTIAL THREATS

Evidence from outside the Basin suggests that barriers to movement may be detrimental to this species.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Allen et al. 2002;
- Beumer 1980;
- Bishop et al. 2001;
- Brown 1992;
- Gehrke et al. 1999;
- Larson & Martin 1989;
- Orr & Milward 1984;
- Pollard et al. 1996;
- Pusey et al. 2004.

PDF LINKS

Fishes of the Murray-Darling Basin: An introductory Guide;

<http://mdba.gov.au/files/publications/MDBA-Fish-species-book.pdf>

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