



Australian Government



Native Fish Strategy

FISH FACTSHEET: SPOTTED GALAXIAS (SPOTTED MOUNTAIN TROUT, TROUT MINNOW)



Scientific Name

Galaxias truttaceus Valenciennes, 1846

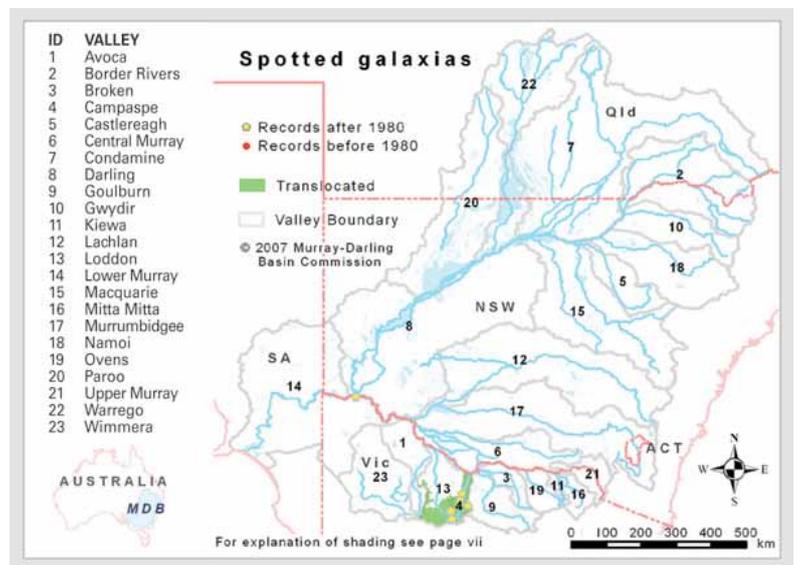
photo by Gunther Schmida

CONSERVATIONS STATUS

Translocated or remnant?

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Normally a species of coastal streams of Vic, Tas and southwest WA, in the Basin the Spotted galaxias is present in the upper Campaspe and Loddon drainages, where it is thought to have been transferred from coastal Victorian streams through its use for bait, or to represent a remnant population of a historically wider distribution. A single recent record of a whitebait of this species is also known from the Lower Murray near Wentworth.



IDENTIFICATION

A large, stout-bodied, scaleless fish with a longish head and large mouth reaching back to below the front of the eyes. Maximum size → 200mm; usually 120-140mm. The anal fin is positioned directly below or slightly behind the dorsal fin, and the tail is slightly forked. The dorsal, anal and caudal fins are golden to orange, with a dark rear fringe. The back is a brownish to deep-olive, fading to brownish-grey on the sides and silvery on the belly. Large, round purplish spots are present on the upper sides and back, each surrounded by a lighter halo. There is a distinct dark diagonal stripe extending down from the bottom of the eye.

BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

In its natural lowland coastal habitats, the Spotted galaxias favours cover such as logs, boulders and overhung banks on the edges of pools. Coastal populations spawn in autumn-winter, and the larvae have a marine phase of several months before returning to estuaries as 45-65mm whitebait in spring. In landlocked populations spawning occurs in spring after an upstream migration into feeder streams, and the larvae fulfilling their pelagic phase in downstream lakes. Fecundity is moderate to high: 1000-16,000 eggs deposited amongst instream aquatic vegetation. The eggs are small (~1.0-1.3mm diameter) and take about four weeks to hatch, and the larvae are about 6.5-9.0mm long at hatching. Spotted galaxias are carnivorous-adults eat aquatic insect larvae and terrestrial insects that fall onto the water surface. They take much of their food in the drift in mid-water, particularly caddisflies and mayflies. The larvae feed mainly on microcrustaceans (copepods) for the first 2-3 months of life. There are significant differences in the ecology of the coastal and landlocked populations of this species in Tasmania, including different timing of the breeding season and the presence of more young fish in coastal populations. There are also significant differences between landlocked Tasmanian and landlocked Western Australian populations: the Tasmanian fish mature later, live longer, grow larger and have larger eggs and larvae. The WA population has the late-autumn spawning season of the coastal Tasmanian fish. Little is known of the species' ecology in the Basin, but it must be assumed that the Basin populations are landlocked given the large numbers of migration barriers between the Campaspe and marine waters.

POTENTIAL THREATS

Predation and displacement by introduced trout species, and habitat loss through deforestation are threats. When translocated, the Spotted galaxias may itself pose a threat to other native fish species through competition for food or space.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Allen et al . 2002;
- Cadwallader & Backhouse 1983;
- McDowall & Fulton 1996;
- Gilligan 2005b;
- Humphries 1989, 1990;
- Humphries & Lake 2000;
- Littlejohn 2000; Morgan 2003.
- Morgan 2003.

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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