



Australian Government



Native Fish Strategy

FISH FACTSHEET: CONGOLLI (TUPONG, SANDY)



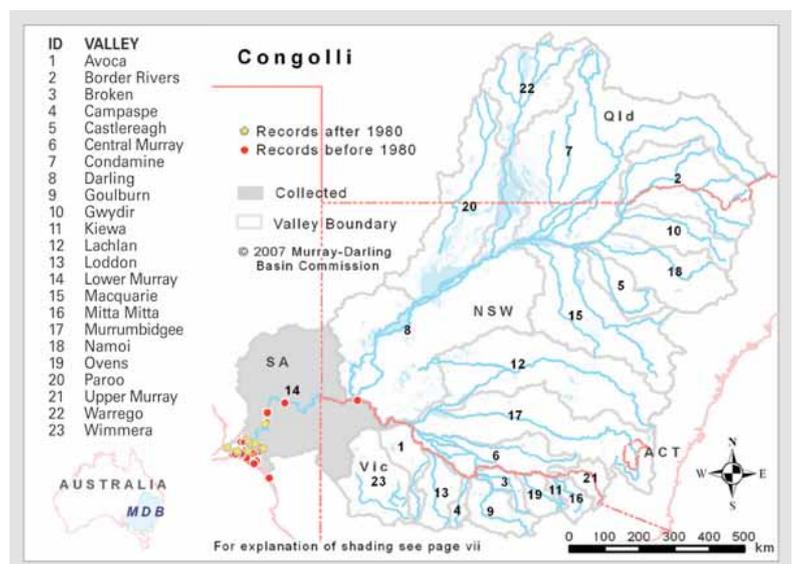
Scientific Name

Pseudaphritis urvillii (Valenciennes, 1831)

photo by Gunther Schmida

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The Congolli is found predominantly in coastal rivers in Tas, Vic, SA, and southern NSW. In the Murray-Darling Basin it only occurs in the Lower Murray drainage, where it has been recorded in the Murray River up to Echuca, streams of the Mt Lofty Ranges and the Lower Lakes (Alexandrina and Albert). It is never abundant in the Basin today, but once formed huge migrations in the lower Murray, and is usually now recorded in low numbers at a site.



IDENTIFICATION

An elongate, small to medium sized, slender fish with an almost cylindrical body. Maximum size ~330mm; commonly 150-200mm. The head is flattened on top and the eyes are small and set high on the head. The mouth is large, extending to below the front of the pupil, and the lower jaw protrudes. The first dorsal fin is short-based and rounded, and the second long-based and straight-edged. The caudal fin is truncate to rounded, and the anal fin is long-based and straight-edged, slightly longer than the second dorsal, and almost opposite in position. Body colour varies with habitat, but is mostly light brown on the back and yellowish-white ventrally, with a series of irregular dark brown blotches on the sides.

BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

Little is known of the Congolli's ecology in the Basin. It is primarily an estuarine species, but can comfortably live in freshwater or the sea. It is known to migrate substantial distances upstream in coastal rivers and in the Lower Murray has been recorded 215 km upstream of the river mouth. In the Lower Murray it occurs in terminal wetlands and a few lowland stream habitats where it is often found partially buried in leaf litter or sand, or associated with cover such as logs, rocks or overhanging banks.

Knowledge of reproduction in this species is limited, but spawning is thought to occur in autumn and winter, with adult fish moving downstream from freshwater habitats to estuaries.

The Congolli is predominantly an opportunistic benthic carnivore. It can also behave as an ambush predator, burying itself in the substrate and taking small fish. The diet from Tasmanian streams comprises mostly small prey items such as aquatic insect larvae, (chironomids, caddisflies, mayflies), small crustaceans (shrimp and amphipods), snails and worms. Some plant material is also consumed. As individuals grow, the importance of shrimps, caddisflies and snails increases and chironomids and mayflies decreases.

POTENTIAL THREATS

Evidence from outside the Basin suggests that barriers to movement may be detrimental to this species, and declining river flows may also be a threat.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Allen et al. 2002;
- Andrews 1996;
- Fulton 1990;
- Hortle & White 1980;
- Kuitert 1993;
- Lloyd & Walker 1986;
- Morris et al . 2001;
- Scott et al . 1974;
- Stuart et al . 2005

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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