



Freshwater Fish of Victoria - Mulletts

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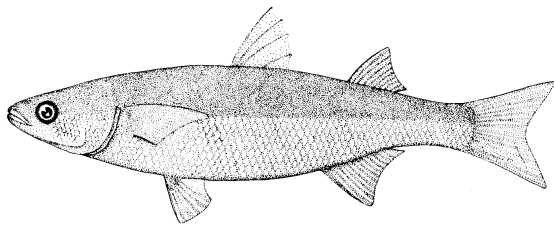
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Family:

Mugilidae

General characteristics: A long body with broad, flattened head, small mouth and no lateral line. Two well-separated dorsal fins, the first spiny, the second soft. The pelvic fins are located in the mid-belly area.



Common Name:
Other Name/s:
Scientific Name:

Yellow-eyed Mullet
Freshwater mullet
Aldrichetta forsteri
(Valenciennes, 1836)
Native

Status:

Description

Large eye. Large mouth, the gape extending back to about level with the rear edge of the eye. Jaws equal in length with bands of small teeth. Head behind the eye and body is covered with moderate sized, easily dislodged scales. Olive-brown to dark greenish-blue on the upper body, bright silvery to yellow on the sides and belly. Slightly-darkened silvery band along the sides. Eye is bright yellow. Fins usually colourless, often with brown edges.

Distribution

Coastal waters in Victoria. Very common, particular in the west.

Habitat

Primarily an estuarine species, very common in coastal brackish waters.

Brief Biology

Known to reach 50 cm, more commonly 25 to 40 cm. Two races of the species are recognised: the western race occurring from western Victoria to Western Australia, and the eastern race occurring in eastern Victoria to New South Wales and Tasmania. Western race breeds in winter, eastern race breeds mid-summer to mid-Autumn.

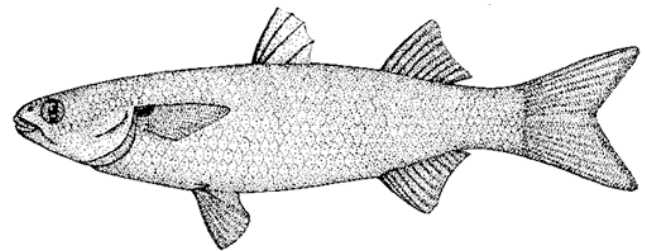
Spawning occurs at sea, although there is some evidence of spawning in Victorian estuaries. Females may lay up to 680,000 eggs, which drift freely in the surface waters. Omnivorous, feeding on algae, crustaceans, detritus and occasionally planktonic creatures.

Other Notes

A shoaling fish, often congregating in large numbers in shallow water over sand, gravel and mud banks. Shoals

usually enter rivers on a rising tide and may move well above tidal influence, returning to estuaries and the sea on a falling tide.

An important commercial fishery, it is also a popular angling and bait species. Flesh is quite tasty.



Common Name:
Other Name/s:

Sea Mullet
Grey mullet, bully mullet,
poddy mullet
Mugil cephalus
(Linnaeus, 1758)
Native

Scientific Name:

Status:

Description

Stout, elongated body, with a broad, flattened head and broad rounded snout. Moderate size eye. Upper jaw is slightly longer than the lower jaw. Upper body colouration is usually a uniform green-olive, bright silvery along the sides, off-white on the belly. In freshwater is upper body often becomes deep blue, grey-blue, brown, green or brown with lighter sides. Often 6-7 narrow, faint, brown strips along the side of the body. Eye is a dull yellow. Most fins are dusky, usually darker than the body.

Distribution

Common in coastal Victoria waters, especially in the east.

Habitat

A pelagic species, inhabiting a wide variety of habitats, including coastal seas, estuaries, lakes and rivers. It is often found far above tidal influence.

Brief Biology

Largest of the Australian *Mugilids*, it can attain a length of 90 cm and weight of 10 kg. Can withstand temperatures from 12 to 25°C and very high salinities to twice that of sea-water. Bottom feeding herbivore, with the gut including a large muscular gizzard for grinding food. Diet varies with age, juveniles feeding on small plankton and crustaceans. Adult fish diet includes microscopic plants. Sexual maturity occurs at about 3 years of age and 30 cm or slightly larger. Mature males and females congregate in large schools in estuaries for some time before moving out to sea to spawn. This migration may commence as early as

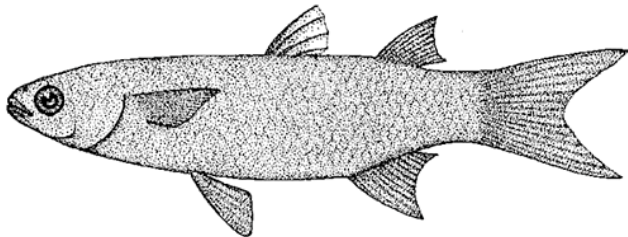


February or as late as July, after which adult fish return to river systems for the greater part of the year to feed and grow.

A single mature female may produce between 300,000 and 7,200,000 eggs, and it has been suggested that females do not spawn every year.

Other Notes

Usually considered a marine species with a world-wide range throughout tropical, sub-tropical and temperate seas. Important commercial food fish species, they will take a bait and are good sport fish. Flesh is oily, rich and tasty.



Common Name:
Other Name/s:

Flat-tailed Mullet
Jumping mullet
Common mullet, Tiger mullet
Liza argentea
(Quoy and Gaimard, 1825)
Native

Scientific Name:

Status:

Description

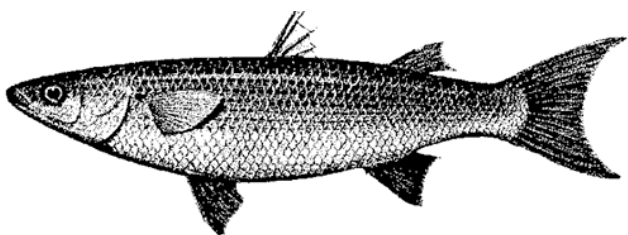
Grows to 30 cm. Small to moderate-sized fish. Head is about as long as the body is deep in larger specimens. Small mouth. Light brown above, silvery below. Dusky dorsal and tail fins. Bright gold patch at the upper, rear corner of the gill cover. Eyes are purple with golden flecks.

Distribution

All estuaries along the Victorian coast; abundant in some waters.

Habitat

Wide variety of habitats, including coastal seas, estuaries, lakes and rivers. Can be found above tidal influence.



Common Name:
Other Name/s:
Scientific Name:

Sand Mullet
Nil
Myxus elongatus
Gunther, 1861
Native

Status:

Description

Small mouth. Large scales; cheeks with 5 rows of scales. Colour is dark olive-green above; silvery below, shading to white on the belly. Fins are dusky with white margins. Yellow eye with iridescent hues. Prominent black spot at the base of the pectoral fin.

Distribution

Estuaries along the Victorian coast; common in some waters.

Habitat

Shallow sandy flats near river mouths, and ocean beaches.

Brief Biology

Grows to 38 cm, but commonly less than 30 cm in Victoria. Spawning probably occurs near mouths of estuaries. Juvenile fish often enter fresh water, but mature fish are rarely seen in fresh water. Commonly seen in brackish water.

Regulations

The Fishing Regulations specify Recreational Fishing Licence requirements and the means by which anglers may take mullet. Details of the licensing requirements and fishing regulations are provided in the *Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide* which is available free of charge from DPI Offices and RFL sales agents.

Freshwater Fish of Victoria is a series of brief information material on the native and introduced freshwater fish of Victoria's inland waters.

Further, detailed reading on Mulletts is contained in:

A Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Victoria
Phillip Cadwallader & Gary Backhouse,
Department of Conservation and Environment

Australian Freshwater Fishes
John R. Merrick & Gunther E. Schmida

Biological Information for Management of Native Freshwater Fish in Victoria

J D Koehn, W G O'Connor
FOV #23 - Mulletts

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