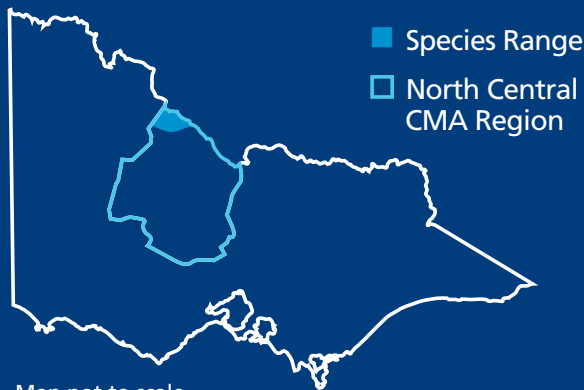


Freshwater Catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*)

Tail fin shape



Map not to scale



Photos Gunther Schmida

Family: Plotosidae

Other common names: Jewfish, Eeltail Catfish

Description: The Freshwater Catfish is a medium sized fish. The rear part of its body is flattened (eel like). The head is large with four pairs of barbels that surround the thick fleshy lips of its large mouth. The skin is smooth, scaleless, and predominantly brown with a white belly. Smaller specimens have a mottled pattern on the back. The adult can grow to 500 mm in size (maximum size is about 900 mm).

Fins: The pectoral, pelvic and two dorsal fins are present. The second dorsal fin continues through the caudal fin and finishes at the anal fin.

Habitat: Prefers low flowing streams and lakes. It is usually found swimming close to sand or gravel substrates with fringing vegetation.

Conservation status & distribution: The species is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Historically common in the Murray-Darling Basin, the species has declined significantly since the late 1970s. Home range for the Freshwater Catfish is thought to be approximately five kilometres. It can also be found in coastal rivers from southern New South Wales to northern Queensland.

Breeding: Spawning occurs during spring and summer when water temperatures reach 20-24°C. Sexual maturity occurs at three to five years.

Eggs: Eggs are non-adhesive, large (3 mm in diameter), and are laid on pebbles, gravel and coarse material which are arranged into a circular nest on the substrate. Eggs can take up to seven days to hatch. The male remains at the nest to fan, clean and guard the eggs. This species may spawn multiple times during a season.

Diet: They are opportunistic carnivores feeding mainly on shrimps, freshwater prawns, yabbies and small fish.

Threats: Alien species such as Carp and Redfin Perch, cold water pollution, barriers to movement, changes to natural flows, sedimentation and elevated salinity levels are all suspected to have contributed to the decline of local populations.

Interesting facts and features: The Freshwater Catfish is thought to be sedentary and show very little movement.

Spawning time

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

The North Central Catchment Management Authority acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners within the region, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in land and natural resource management.

The information on this Fact Sheet is extracted from the North Central Waterwatch Fish Field Guide. Please visit the North Central Catchment Management Authority website, www.nccma.vic.gov.au for more information.

