



Flathead Gudgeon *Philypnodon grandiceps*

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Flathead Gudgeon is a native Australian species. It has a broad and flat head with a large mouth. Adult males have a larger mouth, a more rounded head and bigger pectoral fins than the females. This species displays variable colourings from black, brown, grey or reddish to greenish-brown all over. Ventrally it becomes yellow with irregular faint brown markings on its sides and a dark spot at the base of the caudal fin. Several dark bands radiate from the eye. Alternating bands of grey and orange are noticeable on the caudal and dorsal fins, while other fins are mostly transparent.



Photo by Gunther Schmida. Source: Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

BIOLOGY AND LIFE CYCLE

This species resides within lakes, reservoirs and brackish estuaries. They are a bottom dwelling species that prefer a mud or rock substrate with weedy patches commonly being found amongst aquatic vegetation. It is less commonly found in gently flowing streams. They reach a maximum size of about 12 cm, however 8 cm is more common. During the breeding season, usually spring to summer, males darken and their fin markings become more vibrant. A clutch of up to 900 elongate eggs are laid by females on a hard surface

such as a piece of wood or rock. It is the male who guards and cares for the nest of eggs, chasing away predators and fanning the eggs with his pectoral fins. Between 4 to 6 days later they emerge as a newly hatched larvae of about 3.8 mm in length. In warmer weather this species has been known to have an extended breeding season. The Flathead Gudgeon feeds on other small fish, crustaceans, insects and tadpoles.

DISTRIBUTION

This species is widespread and common in the South-east coast Drainage Division between the Burdekin River in Queensland and the Murray River mouth in

South Australia and extends inland throughout the Murray-Darling system.

CONSERVATION STATUS IN VICTORIA

They are common and widespread across Victoria.

KEY THREATS

Key threats to this species are currently unknown, since they are widespread and common across Victoria.