

Eastern gambusia

Gambusia holbrooki



In 1991, an established population was discovered in a farm dam in the Tamar River catchment. The IFS attempted to eradicate the population using fish poison. In 2000 it was rediscovered in the Tamar River where it occurs in a few locations.

Description: A small fish, head has a flat top, upturned mouth, large eyes, rounded tail fin and single dorsal fin. Females are deeper in the body and have a large black blotch at the rear of the belly.

Colour: It is green to brown on top, grey with a bluish sheen on the sides and silvery-white on the belly.

Size: Females grow to a maximum length of 60 mm, males rarely exceed 35 mm.

Habitat: Adults occur in still to slow-flowing water, in vegetated ponds and lakes, backwaters and quiet pools of streams. They can also live in brackish and marine conditions. They are capable of tolerating temperatures from 0 to 44°C.

Diet: Adults feed on small terrestrial insects actively and selecting very small prey. Only a small part of their diet is mosquito larvae.

Life Cycle: Mature from four weeks after birth. Gestation lasts four weeks. Females give birth to live fry and may have up to 350, but generally around 50 young. They can have nine broods per year.

Distribution status: Introduced.

Original range: These fish are native to North America and were introduced to Australia in 1925 to assist with mosquito control. Have been shown to ineffectively control mosquitos.

Reasons for change to distribution: Very effective at invading new habitats. Often spread by floods and can survive in brackish and marine water. Measures are taken to eradicate and/or control this species from/in Tasmanian waters.

Legal status: **Controlled Fish.**

Can it be taken? No, any possession of a Controlled Fish is strictly prohibited. If they are found, you must notify the Inland Fisheries Service immediately.

Other names: Eastern mosquitofish.



Illustration Alexis Beckett

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