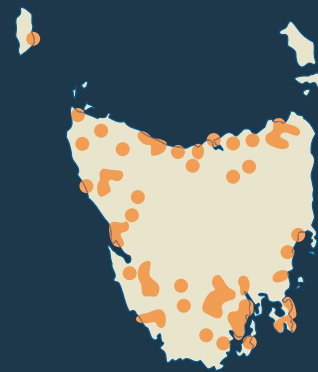


Pouched lamprey

Geotria australis



Reasonably common in many rivers around the state, although the extent of their distribution is not well known.

Description: Primitive eel-like fishes with two dorsal fins near the tail and seven pairs of pore-like gill openings. They do not have jaws but a mouth in the shape of a disc. This is fringed with skin flaps and armed with many small horn like teeth. Lampreys don't have scales and have skeletons made of cartilage. Eyes are positioned on the side of the head. Adult males develop a large pouch below the head during the upstream spawning run.

Colour: Juvenile lampreys are brown, and the adults are bluish grey on top and silvery underneath. The colour in adults may change to a dull brown after they return to fresh water.

Size: Larvae to 80 mm, young fish from 80 mm and the adults 500 to 700 mm long.

Habitat: Larvae prefer slower flowing water where they can burrow into mud, sand or silt. Adults are found in faster flowing water on the sides of rivers with suitable shelter that they tend to burrow into at night. During the day they can be found beneath loose stones.

Diet: The larvae are filter feeders, feeding on algae, detritus and micro-organisms. Adults during their marine stage are parasitic on fish, but do not feed when they enter freshwater.

Life Cycle: Lampreys have several distinct stages in their life cycle. Filter feeding larvae bury themselves in the substrate of streams for up to four years. After a metamorphosis, the young fish then migrate downstream to sea where they become parasitic feeders. After a year or two at sea the adults return to the streams to spawn. They require sand, gravel or pebble substrates for spawning. They die after spawning.

Distribution status: Native.

Original range: Found in southern Australia, South New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, Falkland and South Georgia islands.

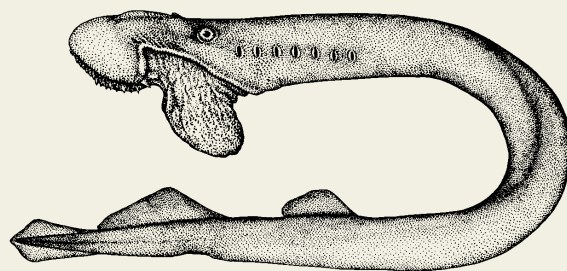
Reasons for change to distribution:

Instream barriers preventing migration. The loss of instream habitat through sand and gravel extraction has further diminished their range.

Legal status: Not listed as Threatened.

Can it be taken? This species may not be taken without a permit.

Other names: N/A.



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