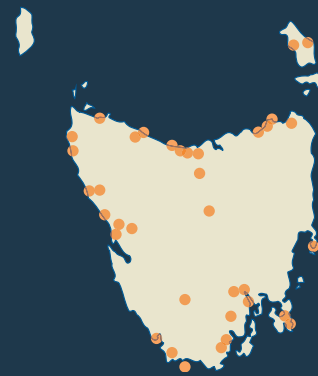


Tasmanian mudfish

Neochanna cleaveri



Reasonably common at low elevations all around the coast, although adults are not often seen.

Description: A small elongated fish that has a single soft-rayed dorsal fin on their back. The anal fin starts a little behind the start of the dorsal fin. As with all Galaxias they don't have scales.

Colour: It is usually gold to greenish brown on the back and sides with numerous darker reddish stripes and patches. The belly is often greyish in colour.

Size: Commonly about 80 mm, but up to 140 mm.

Habitat: A secretive fish that is rarely seen. Found mostly in still waters in heavily vegetated mud-bottom swampy areas near the coast and the lower parts of coastal streams. Mostly nocturnal. During dry periods it is able to burrow into the mud, or hide under logs and stones to survive.

Diet: Although unstudied, it is presumed to feed on terrestrial and aquatic insects and other small animals.

Life Cycle: Spawning habits are unstudied, but it is believed they spawn during Winter. The larvae are washed downstream to sea where they spend two to three months. The juvenile fish then form part of the whitebait run returning in Spring. Adults live in the lower reaches of coastal streams.

Distribution status: Native.

Original range: Found along the coastal areas of mainland Australia from Victoria (Wilson's Promontory) to eastern South Australia (Robe). Found around coastal Tasmania and Flinders Island.

Reasons for change to distribution: Range has been reduced by in-stream barriers preventing migration runs. Drainage of large areas of swamp and wetlands causing loss of instream and marsh habitat. Listed as Critically Endangered in Victoria and South Australia. Climate change has been said to be a threatening process to this species.

Legal status: IUCN Endangered

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

Other names: Formally known as *Galaxias cleaveri*, mud galaxias



Photo T A Raadik



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