

Eastern Blue Groper

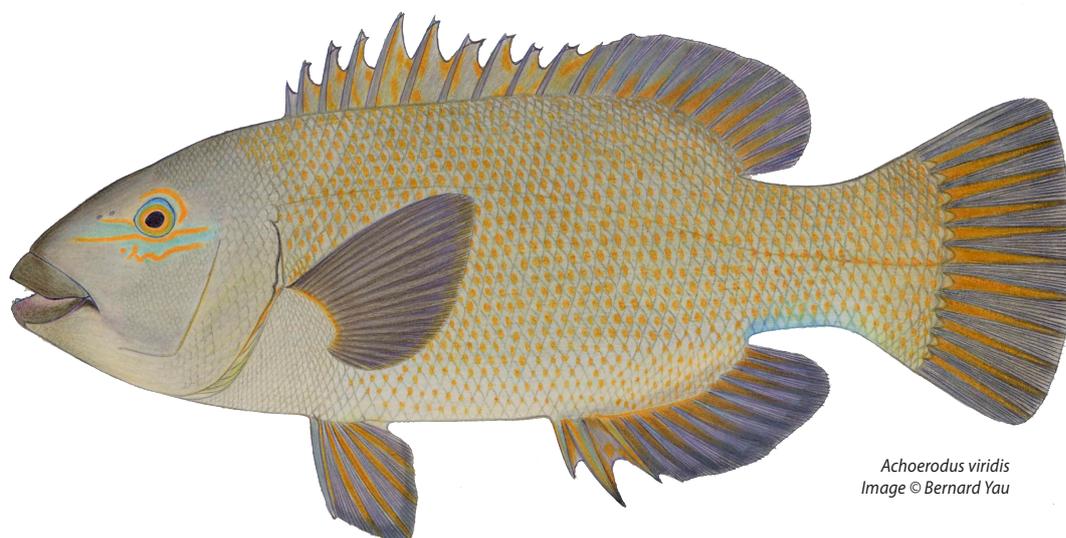
(*Achoerodus viridis*)

EXPLOITATION STATUS	UNDEFINED
----------------------------	------------------

Stock was considered to be depleted in the 1960s and closures were introduced. Now a recreational line only species, and there is insufficient recent data to allow the current status to be specified.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	STANDARD NAME	COMMENT
-----------------	---------------	---------

<i>Achoerodus viridis</i>	eastern blue groper	
---------------------------	---------------------	--



Achoerodus viridis
Image © Bernard Yau

Background

The eastern blue groper (*Achoerodus viridis*) occurs around rocky headlands and coastal reefs from southern Queensland to eastern Victoria. A similar species, the western blue groper (*A. gouldii*) occurs in coastal waters of southern Western Australia and through the Great Australian Bight. These two species are the largest members of the family Labridae (wrasses) in southern Australian waters, and are frequently seen by divers close in to the shore.

The eastern blue groper can grow to over a metre in length and a weight of 25 kg. Although growth of blue groper has not been studied in detail, it is likely they are long-lived and relatively slow growing. The species is noted for its social structure, with the one large blue male often being attended by a number of

smaller females, which are red-brown in colour. Blue groper are hermaphrodites - females generally change into males at around 50 cm in length, although the timing of this change can be influenced by environmental and social factors.

In NSW, the stock of eastern blue groper was considered to be significantly depleted by fishing, and a five year fishing closure was imposed between 1969 and 1973. In 1974 commercial fishing and recreational angling were permitted again, but the ban on spearfishing was continued. In 1980 the commercial sale of eastern blue groper was prohibited and since then the species has been restricted solely to capture by recreational line fishing.

Additional Notes

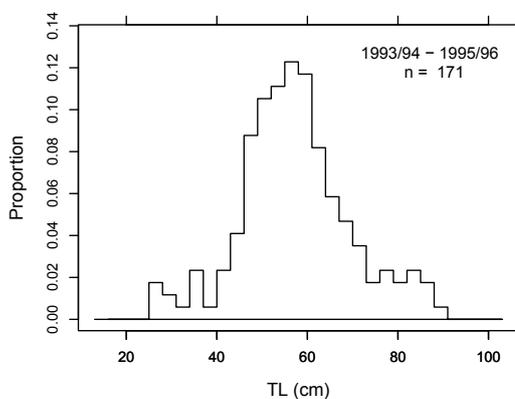
- This long lived species is endemic to eastern Australia and occurs close inshore in rocky reef areas.
- Although the blue form is often male and the red form female, research has shown this is not always the case.
- Recreational trailer boat study estimated landings at 5 thousand fish / 16 t in the mid 1990s.
- Blue groper have a minimum legal length of 30 cm, and a bag limit of 2 fish with a maximum of 1 fish over 60 cm.

Catch

Recreational Catch of Eastern Blue Groper

The annual recreational harvest of eastern blue groper in NSW is likely to be between 20 to 50 t. This estimate is based upon the results of the offshore recreational trailer boat survey (Steffe *et al.* 1996) and onsite surveys undertaken by I & I NSW. Blue groper are not permitted to be taken by commercial fishers.

Length Frequency of Eastern Blue Groper



The length distribution of eastern blue groper landed by recreational trailer-boat fishers between 1993 and 1996 was comprised mainly of fish between 40 and 80 cm total length (TL).

Further Reading

- Gillanders, B. M. (1995). Reproductive biology of the protogynous hermaphrodite *Achoerodus viridis* (Labridae) from south-eastern Australia. *Marine and Freshwater Research* **46** (7): 999-1008.
- Gillanders, B. M. (1995). Feeding ecology of the temperate marine fish *Achoerodus viridis* (Labridae): Size, seasonal and site-specific differences. *Marine and Freshwater Research* **46** (7): 1009-1020.
- Gillanders, B.M. (1995). Links between estuarine and coastal reef populations of *Achoerodus viridis* (Pisces: Labridae). Sydney, University of Sydney. **PhD Thesis**: 191pp.
- Steffe, A.S., J. Murphy, D. Chapman, B.E. Tarlington, G.N.G. Gordon and A. Grinberg (1996). An assessment of the impact of offshore recreational fishing in New South Wales on the management of commercial fisheries. FRDC Project 94/053. Final report to Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. Sydney, NSW Fisheries Research Institute: 139 pp.
- Worthington, D.G., D.J. Ferrell, S.E. McNeill and J.D. Bell (1992). Growth of four species of juvenile fish associated with the seagrass *Zostera capricorni* in Botany Bay, New South Wales. *Australian Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* **43** (5): 1189-1198.

Please visit the CSIRO website, <http://www.marine.csiro.au/caab/> and search for the species code (CAAB) 37 384043 , common name or scientific name to find further information.