

RECOMMENDATION

*MACQUARIA AUSTRALASICA* - MACQUARIE PERCH

The Fisheries Scientific Committee, established under Part 7A of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (the Act), has made a recommendation to list *Macquaria australasica*, Macquarie perch, as a VULNERABLE SPECIES in Schedule 5 of the Act.

The listing of Vulnerable Species is provided for by Part 7A, Division 2 of the Act.

The Fisheries Scientific Committee has found that:

1. Macquarie perch, *Macquaria australasica* (Cuvier, 1830), of the family Percichthyidae, is also known by the common names silvereye, white-eye, mountain perch, bream and black bream.
2. *Macquaria australasica* has been recorded from south-eastern Australia, at moderate to high altitudes in rivers and reservoirs. The species is described and figured in Harris, J.H. and S.J. Rowland, 1996, Family Percichthyidae - Australian freshwater cods and basses, in McDowall, R.M. (ed.) *Freshwater fishes of south-eastern Australia*, where details of its distribution are also given.
3. *Macquaria australasica* is a relatively fecund, quick growing and early maturing species. Despite these characteristics most known populations are small. Historical records show that the species was widespread and abundant in the upper reaches of the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers and their tributaries.
4. *Macquaria australasica* appears to have suffered a population decline in NSW, based upon:
  - the very restricted and fragmented distributions of current populations in NSW tributaries of the Murray River system; and
  - its absence from significant sections of its former range.
5. *Macquaria australasica* has the following official conservation status:
  - listed in Victoria as a threatened species;
  - listed as endangered in the ACT;
  - protected in NSW and the ACT; and
  - western populations listed by the Australian Society for Fish Biology as vulnerable.
6. The causes of decline in *Macquaria australasica* are likely to include:
  - overfishing by recreational fishers;
  - EHN disease, which is carried by redfin perch;
  - spawning failures due to cold water releases from dams;

- construction of barriers to migration and recolonisation;
- habitat degradation, particularly siltation and snag removal; and
- competition with and predation by brown trout and redfin perch.

7. In light of 4, 5 and 6 above, the Fisheries Scientific Committee has determined that *Macquaria australasica* is eligible for listing as a VULNERABLE SPECIES in Schedule 5 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, and accordingly that the Schedule be amended by inclusion of that species.

Dr Andrew Sanger  
Chairperson  
Fisheries Scientific Committee