

Australian Anchovy

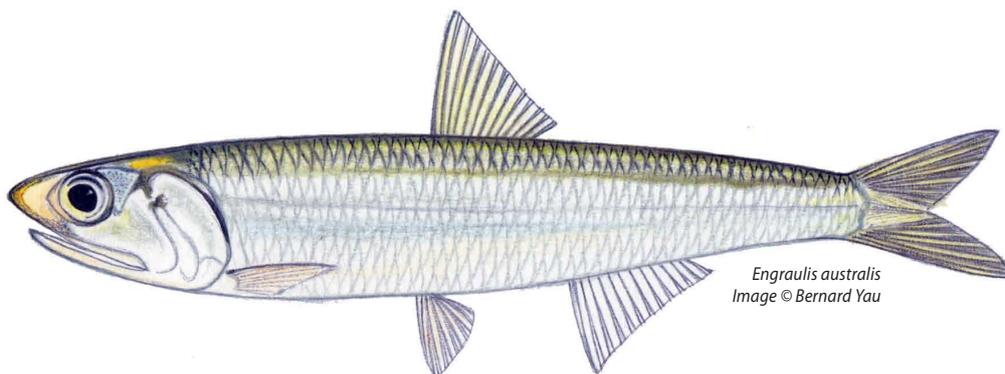
(*Engraulis australis*)

EXPLOITATION STATUS	UNDEFINED
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Very little information is available for this species, but it is likely to be a fast growing species with limited concerns for overfishing.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	STANDARD NAME	COMMENT
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<i>Engraulis australis</i>	Australian anchovy	
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Background

Anchovies are generally similar in appearance to pilchards and sprats but have a distinctive undershot lower jaw and are usually smaller, rarely exceeding 12 cm in length. Worldwide, there are about 140 species of anchovies, most of which are found in tropical or subtropical waters. Anchovies are mostly coastal pelagic fishes inhabiting shallow depths and, although sometimes found out to water depths of 200 m, they commonly enter large estuaries and bays. They feed predominantly on copepods and other zooplankton and, in turn, are important forage fish for many marine predators, from the many carnivorous pelagic fishes and squids to small dolphins and seabirds. Anchovies often form very large and dense schools and are commercially important in many parts of the world, being the basis of large industrial fisheries for fishmeal as well as being caught for human consumption.

The Australian anchovy (*Engraulis australis*) is found in temperate waters from central Queensland around southern Australia to Shark Bay in WA, although its continuous distribution throughout the Great Australian Bight is still uncertain. It is also found around Lord Howe Island and is the only species of anchovy in New Zealand, inhabiting waters around the North Island and most of the South Island. Juveniles are mainly found in estuaries and bays, whereas mature anchovies are found in open coastal waters, moving inshore in spring during the breeding season. The preferred water temperatures of the Australian anchovy range from 10 to 21°C, with breeding temperatures being between 14 to 20°C. Salinity tolerances vary greatly, from 2 to 37‰ salinity with at least 15‰ salinity needed for spawning to occur.

Around Australia, there are three distinct populations of anchovy (off western, southeastern, and eastern Australia) that, with more research, may turn out to be separate species. The eastern population, found along the Queensland and NSW coasts, begin spawning in spring and peak during summer. The anchovy in the north commence breeding some weeks before their southern counterparts. In the north, the anchovy mainly spawn in the open sea over the continental shelf, whereas in the south, they breed in inlets and harbours as well as in the open sea.

Maturity is reached within one year in both the male and female anchovy, at a length of 6-7 cm. Their maximum life span is about six years with a maximum length of about 16 cm, although few over 10 cm are found. Anchovies exhibit seasonal growth, with faster growth occurring throughout spring and summer.

Anchovies in NSW are landed at low levels throughout the year, with large catches taken only sporadically. Annual landings have exceeded 80 t (2001/02) but are mostly less than 40 t. The bulk of the anchovy catch is taken in ocean waters with purse seine nets, and smaller quantities are taken in both estuarine and ocean waters using Pilchard, Anchovy and Bait (PAB) nets. Only a small percentage of the commercial anchovy catch is sold for human consumption with the majority sold for bait or aquaculture feed.

Additional Notes

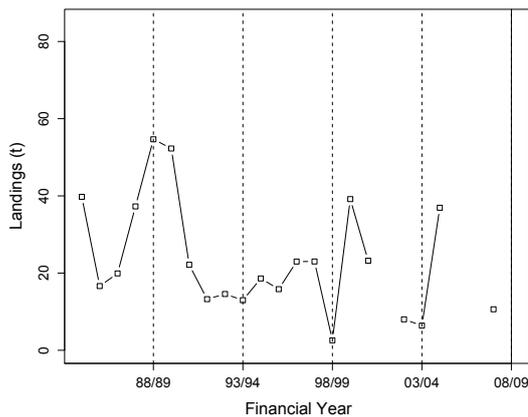
- Recent commercial catches have been very low (< 10 t) with few active fishers.
- Recreational landings are likely to be insignificant.
- There is a recreational bag limit of 50 for Australian anchovy.

Catch

Recreational Catch of Australian Anchovy

The annual recreational harvest of Australian anchovy in NSW is likely to be less than one tonne.

Historical Landings of Australian Anchovy



Commercial landings (including available historical records) of Australian anchovy for NSW from 1984/85 to 2008/09 for all fishing methods. Financial years where commercial catch was reported by less than six fishermen were removed due to privacy concerns.

Further Reading

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Please visit the CSIRO website, <http://www.marine.csiro.au/caab/> and search for the species code (CAAB) 37 086001, common name or scientific name to find further information.

