Silver Sweep  
*(Scorpis lineolatus)*

**Exploitation Status**  
Fully Fished  
A long lived species which may be susceptible to localised depletion. Fully fished in localised areas such as Wollongong but maybe moderately fished state-wide.

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<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<td><em>Scorpis lineolatus</em></td>
<td>silver sweep</td>
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**Background**

Silver sweep (*Scorpis lineolatus*) are most abundant in NSW waters but also occur in southern Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. Adults and juveniles are associated with coastal and estuarine reefs. Silver sweep mature at approximately 17 cm fork length at an age of 2 to 3 years and spawn during winter in NSW. Growth slows substantially following sexual maturity and silver sweep exhibit significant longevity, with a maximum estimated age of 54 years. A recent study estimated that more than 50% of silver sweep landed in NSW were greater than 15 years old. The longevity and slow growth of this species may make it particularly vulnerable to over-harvesting.

In NSW, more than 80% of commercial landings of silver sweep are by fish traps in the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery, with the remaining catch taken by purse seine nets in the Ocean Hauling Fishery. Trap landings are highest during spring and summer months, whereas purse seine landings tend to be higher during autumn.

Silver sweep are caught in significant numbers by recreational fishers angling from rock platforms and boats in coastal waters.
Additional Notes

- Silver sweep is a long-lived inshore rocky reef species taken commercially by purse-seine and trap fishers, and is a common recreational catch.
- Research (Stewart and Hughes, 2005) found silver sweep can live for more than 50 years; however they mature at a small size and early age (17 cm FL and 2-3 years).
- The age structure of samples obtained in 2003 and 2005/06 was indicative of a stock under relatively low fishing pressure, however silver sweep may be susceptible to localised depletion.
- Catch rates of the purse seine fishery (centred on the Wollongong area) have declined over the past decade; catch rates for fish trapping, after a decline in the late 1990’s, have recently returned to previous levels.

Catch

Recreational catch of Silver Sweep

The annual recreational harvest of silver sweep in NSW is likely to lie between 30 and 60 t. This estimate is based upon the results of the offsite National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey (Henry and Lyle, 2003) and onsite surveys undertaken by I & I NSW.

Commercial landings (including available historical records) of silver sweep for NSW from 1990/91 to 2008/09 for all fishing methods.

Landings by Commercial Fishery of Silver Sweep

- Ocean Trap and Line (Key Secondary Species)
- Ocean Hauling (Target Species)

Reported landings of silver sweep by NSW commercial fisheries from 1997/98. Fisheries which contribute less than 2.5% of the landings are excluded for clarity and privacy.

Catch Per Unit Effort Information of Silver Sweep Harvested by Fish Trapping in NSW

Catch rates of silver sweep harvested using fish trapping for NSW. Two indicators are provided: (1) median catch rate (lower solid line); and (2) 90th percentile of the catch rate (upper dashed line). Note that catch rates are not a robust indicator of abundance in many cases. Caution should be applied when interpreting these results.
The length distribution of commercial landings of silver sweep comprised mainly of fish between 20 and 30 cm fork length (FL). There is no minimum legal length for sweep in NSW.

Further Reading


Please visit the CSIRO website, http://www.marine.csiro.au/caab/ and search for the species code (CAAB) 37 361009, common name or scientific name to find further information.