



Mountain Galaxias

Galaxias olidus

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Mountain Galaxias is native to Australia. It is a small and stout fish with a small head blunt snout, and small, thick, fleshy fins. Colouring is variable from yellowish green on the back to brown, with an olive or silvery white underside. The back and upper sides of this fish are covered with speckling, blotches and banding or bars.



Photo: Tarmo A. Raadik

BIOLOGY AND LIFE CYCLE

This species is most commonly found in clear flowing streams with a sand, gravel or boulder substrate. They form loose schools in pools and runs, and remain solitary among rocks or at the streams edge. Mountain Galaxias can tolerate water temperatures of up to 32 degree Celsius.

Commonly this fish reaches about 70 mm in length, but has been known to reach up to 135 mm.

This fish completes its entire lifecycle in freshwater. It usually spawns in the spring time with the females producing few eggs (50 to 350). It has been known to

extend spawning through summer and into autumn in alpine populations. Fertilized eggs are about 2.3 mm. Incubation can take up to 3 weeks at a temperature of about 15 degrees Celsius, and the newly hatched larvae are between 9 and 10 mm in length. Juvenile fish grow rapidly, attaining a length of around 30 mm in just 8 weeks. The young move in shoals until they find suitable habitat.

Being carnivorous they feed on a range of aquatic insects, crustaceans, molluscs and worms.

DISTRIBUTION

Widely distributed in rivers, draining east and west of the Great Dividing Range, of eastern Australia. Can be

locally abundant across its range.

CONSERVATION STATUS IN VICTORIA

This species conservation status is insufficiently known. However, it is locally abundant and widespread

in its natural range despite predation from introduced fish species.

KEY THREATS

Suffers from predation by Trout and Redfin, which are capable of causing the Mountain Galaxias to become locally extinct. In both Victoria and New South Wales Trout have reduced the range and abundance of Mountain Galaxias into isolated populations. In the presence

of Trout, Mountain Galaxias are confined to areas inaccessible to Trout, such as behind barriers and above waterfalls. *Galaxias olidus* has similar food and habitat requirements as that of small Trout and thus competes for food and living space.