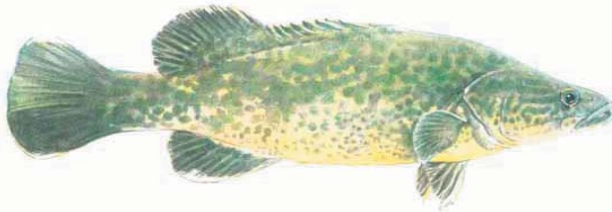




# Save the Murray

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## Native Fish



In the last 50 years, populations of native fish species in the Murray Darling Basin have suffered serious decline in distribution and abundance.

Native fish are indicators of overall river health. The decline in their numbers is a warning to us that the ecological functioning of the river is at risk.

Eight native fish species have been listed nationally as vulnerable or endangered. Some localized extinctions have occurred.

The decline in numbers of native fish is contributed to by a number of factors including:

- Poor water quality (saline or turbid)
- Removal of snags (logs, branches and fallen trees) important for breeding, feeding and protection
- Sectioning of the river by construction of dams and weirs, limiting migration
- Overstocking of introduced (alien) fish species spreading disease
- Over fishing of native fish stocks
- Thermal pollution associated with the release of cold water from dams

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission has a Fish Management Plan in place that

- Coordinates the construction of engineering works such as fishways to help migratory species
- Encourages river management procedures to recreate traditional breeding environments where possible;
- Protects habitat by measures such as restricting de-snagging and protecting or planting riparian buffer zones

- Encourages breeding program, the standardisation of fishing rules between states, and the introduction of new protective legislation and controls to restrict fishing during spawning seasons.

The Murray Darling Basin Commission also recently released a Draft Native Fish Strategy; its goal is to rehabilitate rapidly declining native fish communities in the Basin to 60% of their estimated pre-European settlement levels.

### Can you fish for native fish?

Yes, providing you abide by all of the regulations including size and bag limits. Some species are protected, so check with local fishing authorities. Some states also require you to have a license for fishing.

Native fish may be found in all waters of the River Murray and its anabranches.

The fish most often targeted by anglers are prevalent in the mainstream of the River Murray.

### Catch and size limits for native fish

Callop – minimum size = 33cm – bag limit of 6 per person per day

Murray Cod – minimum size = 50 cm, maximum size = 110cm – bag limit 2 per person per day

Yabbies – 200 per person per day

RECREATIONAL FISHERS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SELL OR TRADE THEIR CATCH

### How do fish get through locks and weirs?

Locks and weirs are like big gates on the river that fish can not get through. To allow fish to freely move up and down the river, structures called “fishways” have been constructed alongside some weirs in the Murray River. These Fishways allow fish to swim from one section of the river around the weir further up or downstream.

Fishways are gently sloping passages that enable fish to move upstream in the River. This assists with fish life cycles and contributes to breeding and distribution of native fish.