

Status of Tasmanian Recreational Fish Species

An Inventory for Planning and Management.



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Fish for the future.



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Introduction/Background

These notes provide some information on the management of important recreational fish species in Tasmania. They draw on information provided by the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) in its annual assessment of scalefish species, and from resource assessments completed by the Bureau of Rural Science on species managed by the Commonwealth. Information presented is not meant to provide a high level of precision about each species, but more to give a broad understanding of the interaction between the commercial and recreational aspects of management at both the State and Commonwealth level.

Management arrangements are complicated, particularly where a species ranges over areas that are managed by the Commonwealth and, indeed, by other States. No attempt has been made to look at the other State catches or interactions at this stage.

Species are listed in this report in respect of their relative importance to the recreational fishery. Lesser known or encountered species and those with the potential for future development are listed towards the end.

We would like to thank Claire Reeves and Fiona Ewing for their assistance.

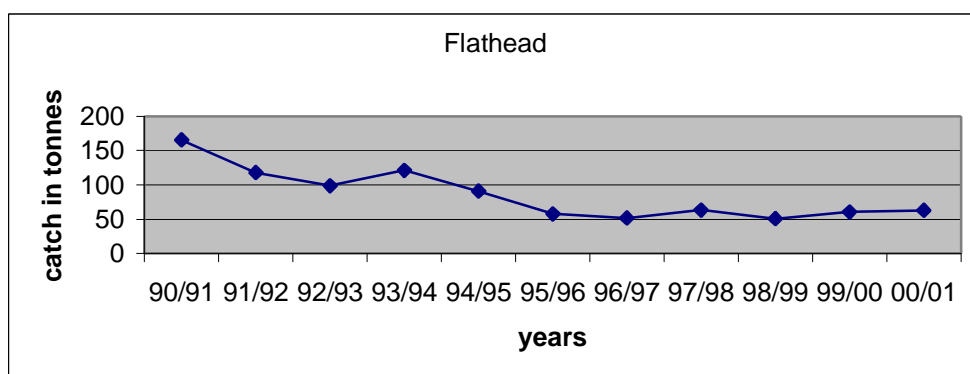
Flathead. *Platycephalus sp.*

Recreational Fishery.

- Recreational catch:** Unknown, but believed to represent the largest catch of all fish species in numbers taken by line.
- Gillnet catch:** 4.6 tonnes. Estimated 1997.
- Fishing methods:** Predominantly line fishing with minor catch in seine and gill nets.
- Recreational controls:** Minimum size limit of 300mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.
- Species information:** Sand flathead (*Platycephalus bassensis*) is the most popular species taken by rod and line recreational fishers, with tiger flathead (*Platycephalus richardsoni*) occasionally also taken. Other species encountered are Castelnau's flathead (*Platycephalus speculator*) and the rock flathead (*Platycephalus laevigatus*), the latter almost exclusively taken in nets.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

- Management:** Licence restrictions.
- Fishing methods:** Inshore trawl, some seine netting and line fishing.
- Catch trend over past decade:** Decline.



- Commercial catch:** 50 to 60 tonnes per year, for last 3 years. Predominantly tiger flathead.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

- Management:** Managed by the Commonwealth fisheries agency – Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA). The main species of the South East Trawl fishery is tiger flathead which spend part of their life cycle inshore. It

is unknown whether stocks off Tasmania are part of the same gene pool as those of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria. Flathead are a quota species.

Fishing methods:	Trawl
Commercial catch:	2,664 tonnes in 1998.
Quota (1999):	3,500 tonnes.
Status:	Fully fished for tiger flathead and probably sustainable but assessment poor.

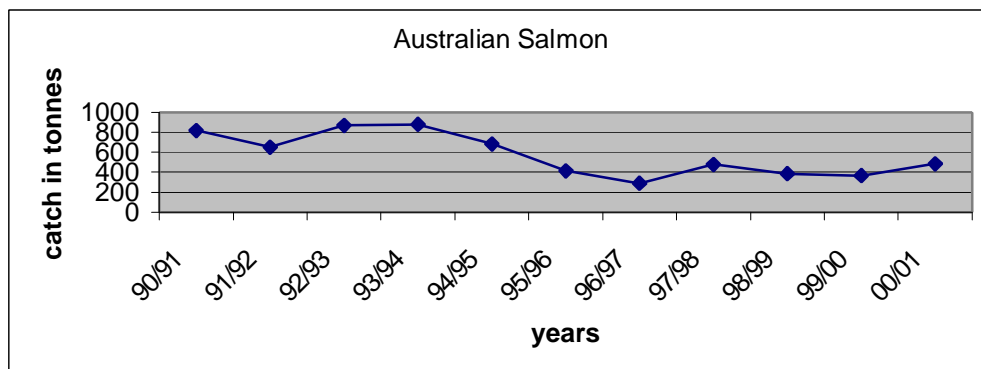
Australian salmon. *Arripis sp.*

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch:	Unknown but a significant recreational fishery.
Gillnet catch:	20.1 tonnes.
Fishing methods:	Line is the main method with some beach seine and gill nets.
Recreational controls:	Minimum size limit of 200mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.
Species information:	There are two stocks - Eastern and Western - which migrate up the NSW and Western Australian coasts to breed. Juvenile fish are taken in Tasmanian waters.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management:	Specific Australian Salmon licence (five), trip limit of 500kgs for other operators, large areas are closed to commercial beach seine netting including from Hawley on the north coast to the Nut at Stanley.
Fishing methods:	Purse seining with one major operator. Some catch by gillnets and beach seine nets.
Catch trend last decade:	Decline due to markets.



Commercial catch: 364 to 483 tonnes over last 2 years.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters

Management: No major fishery for Australian salmon in Commonwealth waters.

Status: No specific assessment done – thought to be stable.

Whiting - school. *Sillago bassensis*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown. Believed to be significant in the south of state.

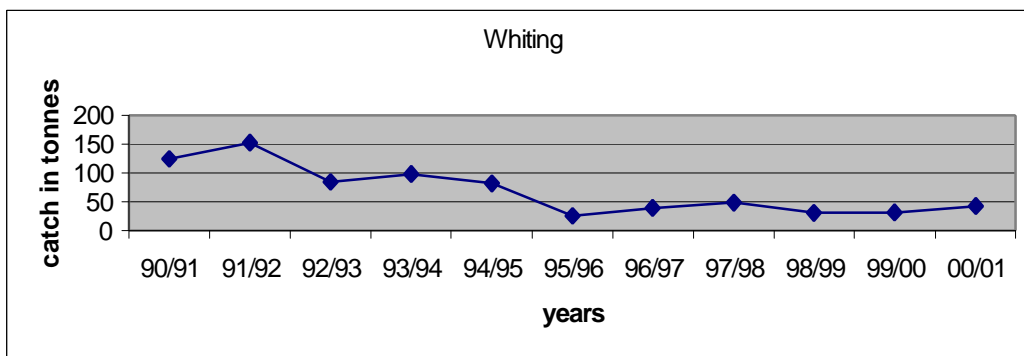
Fishing methods: Rod and line. Minor beach seine.

Recreational controls: Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: As part of the Tasmanian inshore trawl fishery. Licence restrictions – require a fishing licence (general trawl). Licences are currently non-transferable.

Fishing method: Danish seining.



Catch trend last decade: Decline.

Commercial catch: 43 tonnes in 2001.

Status: Status of stock is uncertain and no recent stock assessment available.

Commercial Fishery- Commonwealth waters.

Management: Total allowable catch in 1999 of 1500 tonnes reduced from 2000 tonnes.

Commercial catch: 638 tonnes in 1998.

Black bream. *Acanthopagrus butcheri*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown, but a significant recreational fishery mainly on east coast of Tasmania.

Fishing methods: Line and gill nets.

Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 250 mm. Bag limit of 10 per person per day. Possession limit 15. No spearing of black bream is allowed.

Status: Unknown.

Commercial Fishery-State waters.

Management: No commercial fishery for black bream. Sale of black bream in Tasmania is prohibited.

Flounders. *Ammotretis sp. Rhombosolea sp. Taratretis sp.*

Recreational Fishery.

Main species: Greenback flounder and long-snouted flounder (sole)

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 5.2 tonnes. The 3rd most important gillnet species taken.

Fishing methods: Spearing, dipnets and gillnets, may occasionally be taken by line.

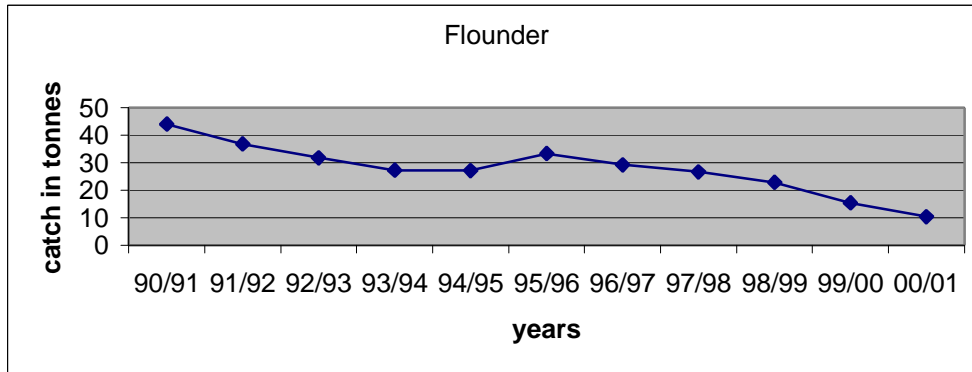
Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 250 mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Limited number of scalefish licences and area closures.

Fishing methods: Inshore gillnets, inshore trawl, seine nets and spearing.

Catch trend last decade: Decline.



Commercial catch: 22 to 10 tonnes over last 3 years.

Status: No special assessment done this year but decline in catch thought to be from a reduction in effort.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: No major fishery for flounder in Commonwealth waters.

Blue warehou (snotty trevally). *Seriolella brama*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 116.3 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Main methods are graball nets and lines, the latter particularly from wharves such as Stanley. Most popular species taken by recreational gillnet.

Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 250 mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

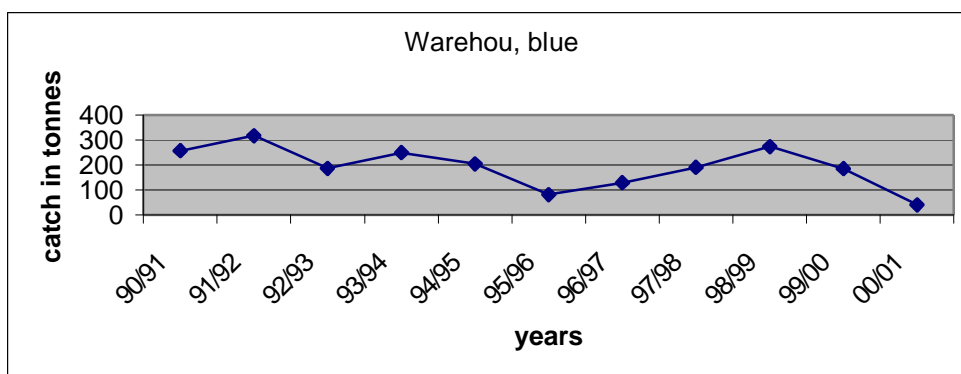
Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Licence restrictions.

Fishing methods: Graball nets.

Catch trend last decade: Volatile.

Commercial catch: 274 to 40 tonnes over last 3 years.



Status: A migratory species. Fully fished to overfished, possibly sustainable but poor assessment. Thought to be over-fished between 1991 and 1996.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: Managed by AFMA. Taken by operators in the South East Trawl and South East Non-trawl fisheries.

Commercial catch: 932 tonnes (trawl), 80 tonnes (non-trawl) in 1998.

Quota (1999): 1,750 tonnes with carry overs of 880 tonnes (trawl) and 1,227 tonnes (non-trawl). Note the quota issued for 1999 was well above the catch for 1998. Tasmania did not support the decision to increase quota.

Bastard trumpeter. *Latridopsis forsteri*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 23.8 tonnes. Predominantly gillnet catch. 4th highest species taken in gillnets.

Fishing methods: Gillnet with occasional take by spear. Rarely caught on line.

Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 350 mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

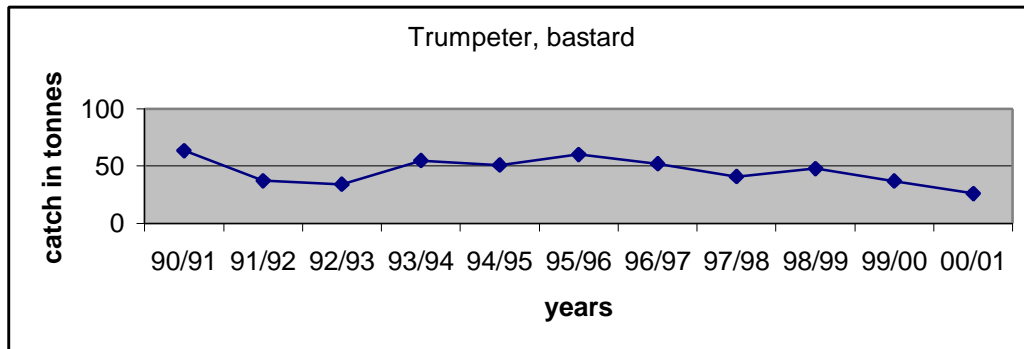
Species information: Spends part of life inshore as an immature fish then goes offshore to breed.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Licence restrictions.

Fishing methods: Graball nets.

Catch trend last decade: Volatile.



Commercial catch: 48 to 26 tonnes over last 3 years.

Status: Probably fully fished with no recent assessment.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: No major fishery for Bastard trumpeter in Commonwealth waters.

Commercial catch: Minor bycatch by offshore gillnetters.

Striped trumpeter. *Latris lineata*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 12.1 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Line and gillnets.

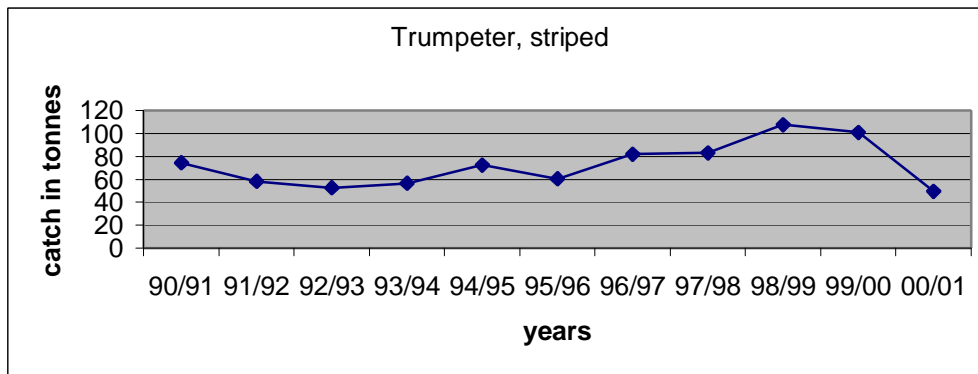
Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 350 mm. Daily bag limit 5. Possession limit 8.

Species information: Juveniles recruit inshore then move offshore as they mature.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters

Management: State jurisdiction of striped trumpeter in both State and Commonwealth waters. Managed by licence restrictions and trip limits.

Fishing methods: Gillnets and lines.



Catch trend last decade: Volatile.

Commercial catch: 108 to 50 tonnes over last 3 years.

Status: Not known but likely to be fully fished in east coast waters. Catches over the next few years will be affected by good 1994 and 1995 recruitment.

Jack mackerel. *Trachurus sp.**

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 3.5 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Line is the main method, also caught by seine nets and gillnets.

Recreational controls: Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Species information: Distribution and abundance is influenced by the prevailing oceanographic conditions.

*Three species of jack mackerel are found in Tasmanian waters: *Trachurus declivus*, *Trachurus murphyi* and *Trachurus novaezelandiae*.

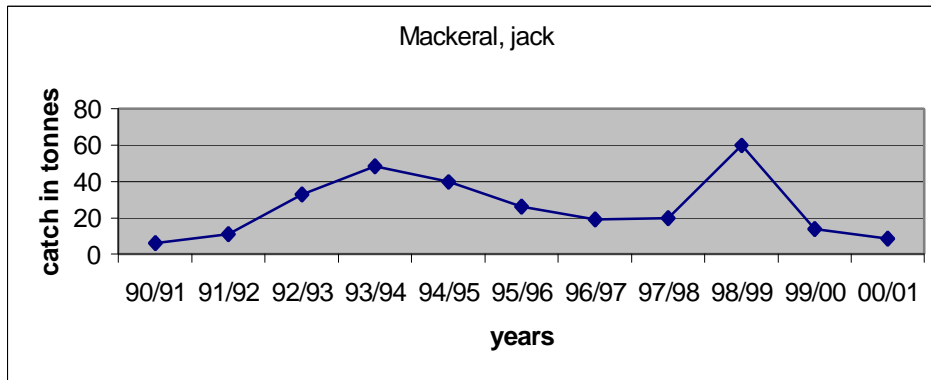
Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Licence and gear restrictions, quota for large specialised vessels.

Fishing methods: Main catch from industrial purse seine fishery and experimental midwater trawl operations, with small catches taken by beach seine and gillnets.

Catch trend last decade: Variable.

Commercial catch: 8.6 tonnes in 2001. **NOTE:** Excludes major catch for fishmeal.



Status: Unknown.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: By joint jurisdiction between the State and Commonwealth in waters of Zone A from 3 nm to 200 nm. Industrial purse seine operations subject to review between State and Commonwealth.

Commercial catch: In 1998 most fish were caught in State waters.

Quota (1999): Same quota as State - shared between waters.

Blue mackerel. *Scomber australasicus*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown

Fishing methods: Line and gillnet.

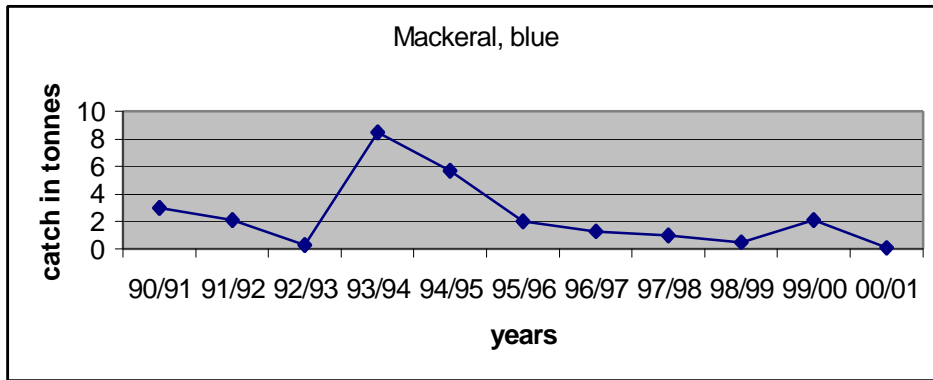
Recreational controls: Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Species information: Seasonal visitor to Tasmania. Adults are regularly taken over the summer and autumn months in Bass Strait.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters. Not a significant commercial fishery.

Management: General licence restrictions and trip limits.

Commercial catch: 2001 <1 tonne.



Fishing method: Gillnet.

Catch trend last decade: Decline.

Jackass morwong (perch). *Nemadactylus macropterus*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 7.0 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Main method is by line, also taken with gillnets.

Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 300 mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

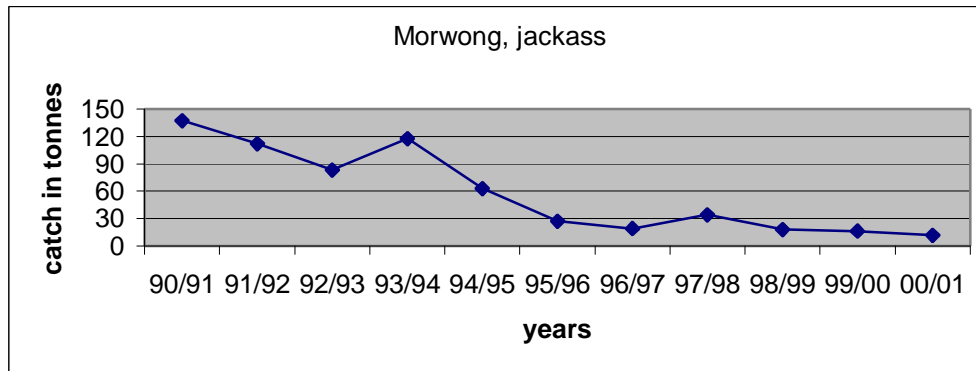
Species information: Spend part of their life in inshore waters before moving offshore.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Fishing methods: Gillnets, trawl, minor line catch.

Management: General licence restrictions.

Catch trend last decade: Major decline.



Commercial catch: 18 to 12 tonnes over last 3 years.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: Managed as a quota species as part of the South East Trawl fishery.

Commercial catch: 883 tonnes in 1998.

Quota (1999): 1,500 tonnes.

Status: Fully fished in the common waters eastern sector, not known if catch is sustainable. Less productive than first thought. Could be two distinct stocks.

Barracouta (snoek). *Thyrsites atun.*

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 1.7 or 4.6 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Line is the main method also taken by gillnets.

Recreational controls: Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

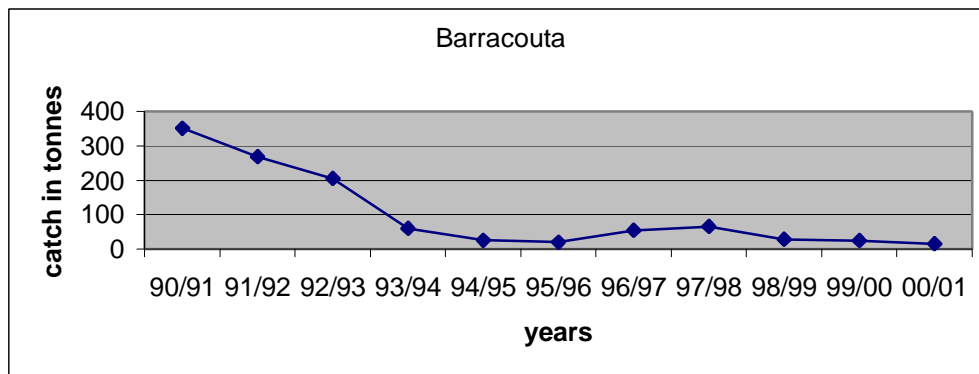
Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: General licence restrictions. – was once a major fishery but now only minor.

Fishing methods: Mainly lines, trawls and occasional gillnet take.

Catch trend last decade: Major decline.

Commercial catch: 27 to 15 tonnes over last 3 years.



Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: Unmanaged fishery in Commonwealth waters.

Fishing method: Trawl, trolling, occasional longline.

Trevally - silver. *Pseudocaranx dentex.*

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 16.9 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Taken by line and by gillnets.

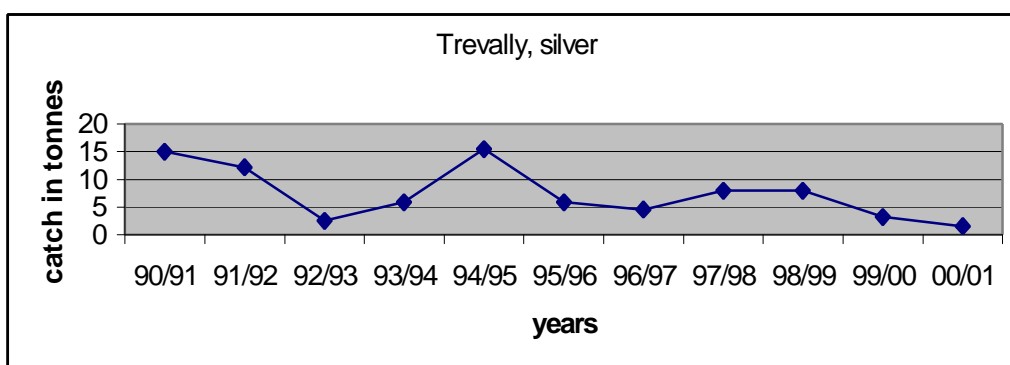
Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 200 mm. Daily bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: General licence restrictions. Minor commercial fishery inshore.

Fishing methods: Gillnets.

Catch trend last decade: Decline.



Commercial catch: 8 to 2 tonnes over last 3 years.

Commercial Fishery – Commonwealth Waters.

Management: Managed as a quota species as part of the South East Trawl fishery.

Commercial catch: 233 tonnes in 1998.

Quota (1999): 500 tonnes.

Status: Unknown if catch is sustainable. May possibly be a single stock.

Note: Trevally is a commonly referred to the name for the blue warehou in the north of the State, catch may have been misrecorded in the past. Silver trevally are also called (incorrectly) silver bream in the same region.

Garfish. *Hyporhampus melanochir.*

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

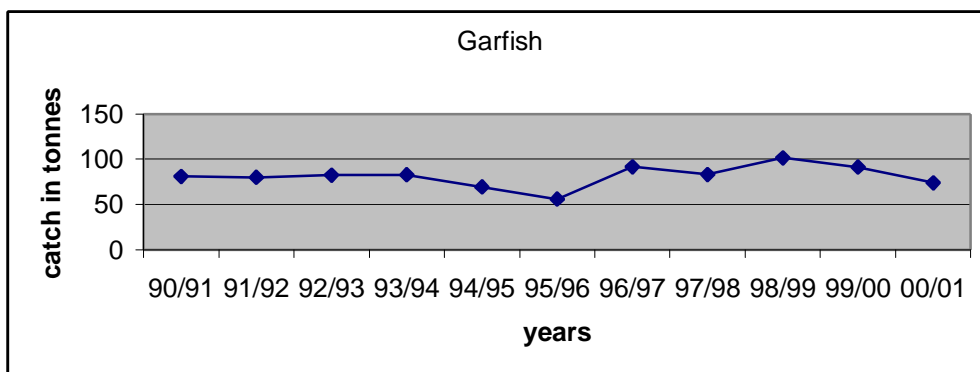
Fishing method: Line, dipnet, and beach seine.

Recreational controls: Size limit of 25cm measured from the upper jaw to end of tail. Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Licence restrictions for beach seine nets. Some concern about the ability for a big shift in effort using dipnets as there is no current requirement for a specific licence.

Fishing methods: Beach seine and dipnets.



Catch trend last decade: Stable with slight decline over recent years.

Commercial catch: 101 to 74 tonnes over last 3 years.

Comments: Closing areas to commercial fishing where there are substantial seagrass beds may help preserve stocks.

Mullet. *Aldrichetta forsteri*, *Mugil cephalus*, *Myxis elongatus*.

Recreational Fishery.

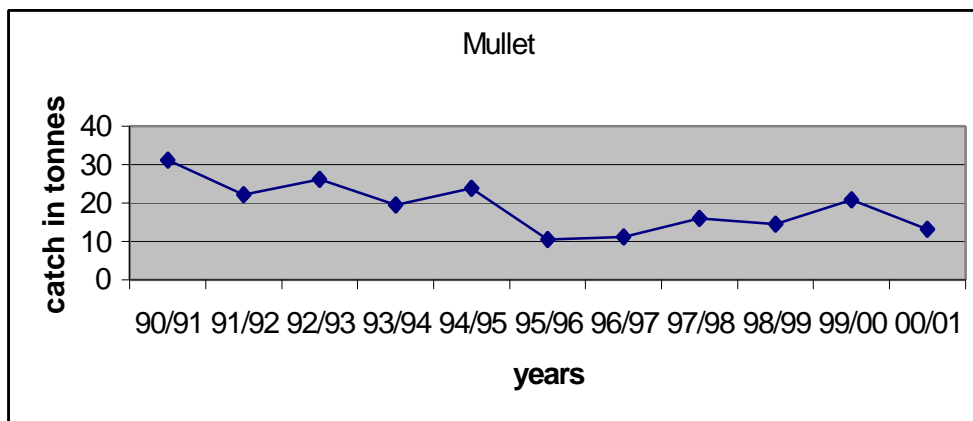
Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 6.5 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Mullet nets and lines.

Recreational controls: Size limit of 250mm applies. Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.



Management: Not a significant commercial fishery.

Commercial catch: 13 tonnes in 2001.

Status: Unknown.

Gurnard.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Fishing methods: Gillnet, line.

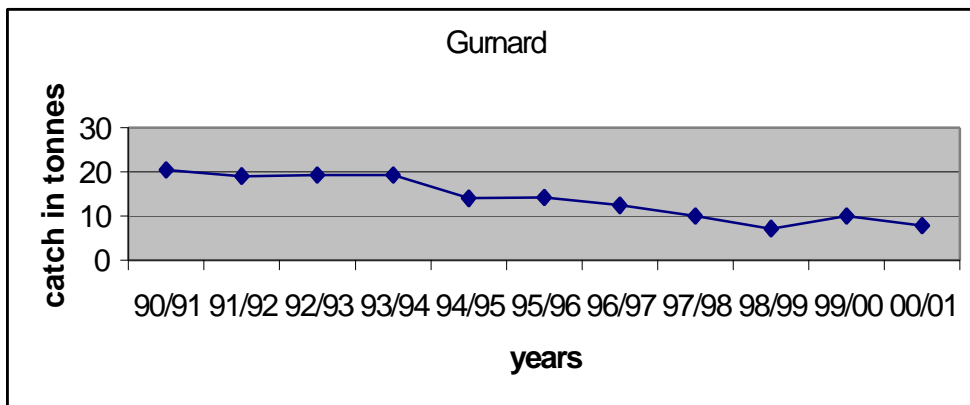
Recreational controls: Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Species information: A number of different species of gurnard are caught waters of Tasmania. Some species carry poisonous spines which can deter fishers from retaining them.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.

Management: Not a significant commercial catch. The ocean perch *Helocolenus sp.* is probably fully fished in the eastern sector of the South East trawl fishery.

Fishing methods: Trawl and occasional dropline.



Commercial catch: 7 tonnes in 2001.

Cod. *Pseudophycis sp.*

Recreational Fishery.

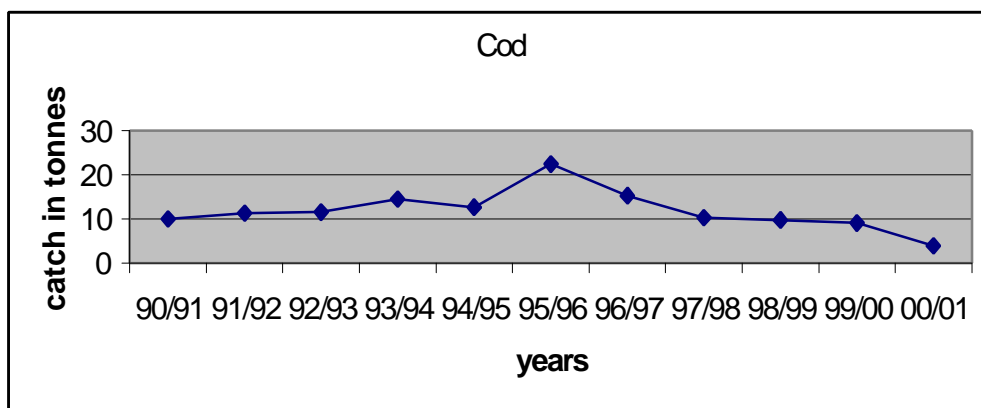
Recreational catch: Unknown.

Gillnet catch: 9.1 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Lines and in gillnets.

Recreational controls: Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.



Commercial catch: 4 tonnes in 2001.

Status: No stock assessment available.

Leatherjacket

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

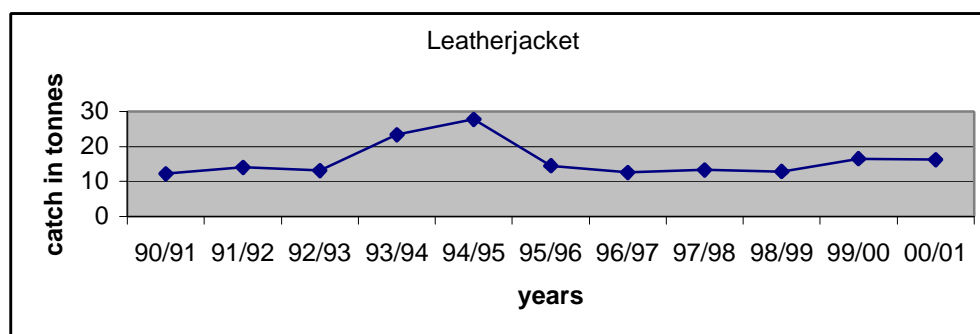
Gillnet catch: 7.3 tonnes.

Fishing methods: Nets and lines.

Recreational controls: Minimum size limit of 200mm. Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Species information: Numerous species of leatherjacket are taken around the coastline of Tasmania.

Commercial Fishery – State Waters.



Management: Licence controls.

Commercial catch: 16 tonnes in 2001 mainly taken in fish traps.

Status: No stock assessment available.

Pike - long finned *Sphyræna novaehollandiae* and short finned. *Dinolestes lewini*.

Recreational Fishery.

Recreational catch: Unknown.

Fishing methods: Lines, mullet nets.

Recreational controls: Bag limit 30. Possession limit 45.

Species information: Significant species in Bass Strait.