



Australian Government



# Native Fish Strategy

## FISH FACTSHEET: GOLDFISH (COMMON CARP)



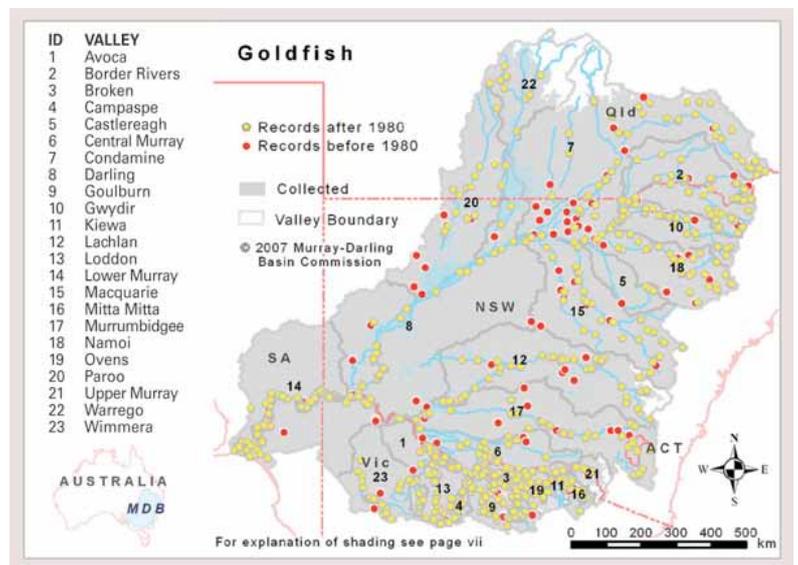
Scientific Name

*Carassius auratus* Linnaeus 1758

photo by Gunther Schmida

### DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Goldfish are native to eastern Asia and were first introduced into Australia in the 1860s when they were imported as an ornamental fish. Widespread in the Murray-Darling Basin, they are often present in substantial numbers in the early years following construction of impoundments. Their abundance in such lakes usually declines after the stocking of predatory species such as Murray cod, Golden perch and trout, which consume large numbers of Goldfish.



## IDENTIFICATION

A small, deep-bodied fish with a forked tail and a small, protrusible mouth that does not reach back to below the eye. Maximum size 400mm; usually less than 200mm. Easily distinguished from Carp by the absence of barbels around the mouth. Like Carp, it has 3–4 stout spines at the front of the dorsal fin, the largest one serrated on the trailing edge. The back is usually olive-bronze to golden, paling to silvery-white on the belly. Occasionally, the classic aquarium colour of orange-red is seen in wild specimens, as is the fan-tail. Individuals can be quite rotund when large, particularly females. Males have fine nuptial tubercles on the body, fins and opercula.

## BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

The Goldfish is usually associated with warm, slow-flowing lowland rivers or lakes, although it is also known from weedbeds and slower-flowing areas of upland rivers. It is often found in association with submerged or emergent freshwater plants such as Ribbon-weed (*Vallisneria*), Bullrush (*Typha*) and Common reed (*Phragmites*). Individuals generally mature at 100–150mm length, although they can be mature at 30–50mm, and spawn during summer at water temperatures of 17–23°C. Eggs are laid amongst freshwater plants and hatch in about one week.

The Goldfish is not known to migrate. Its diet includes small crustaceans, freshwater insect larvae, plant material and detritus. It is often heavily infested with the parasitic copepod Anchorworm (*Lernaea* sp.).

## IMPACTS ON NATIVE FISH

A consignment of Goldfish from Japan to Victoria is believed to be responsible for introducing to Australia the disease 'Goldfish ulcer', which also affects salmonid species such as trout. Apart from the introduction of this disease, the species is generally regarded as a 'benign' introduction to Australia and New Zealand, with few or no adverse impacts documented.

## GENERAL REFERENCES

- Allen et al. 2002;
- Brumley 1996;
- Clements 1988;
- Lintermans & Osborne 2002;
- Merrick & Schmida 1984;
- Moffat & Voller 2002;

## PDF LINKS

Fishes of the Murray-Darling Basin: An introductory Guide;  
<http://mdba.gov.au/files/publications/MDBA-Fish-species-book.pdf>

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**Murray-Darling Basin Authority**

GPO Box 1801 Canberra ACT 2601

Tel 02 6279 0100 Fax 02 6248 8053

[www.mdba.gov.au](http://www.mdba.gov.au)

