

Common names DELICATE BLUE-EYE,
ARNHEM LAND BLUE-EYE

Aboriginal names Dilebang or Dohlbo

Scientific name *Pseudomugil tenellus*

Distribution A very patchy distribution within the coastal drainages of the Timor Sea and Cape York Peninsular; also in southern Papua New Guinea and the Aru islands

Habitat Most common on the floodplain, rarer in the lowlands and occasionally found in some escarpment streams

Size Up to 4 cm, usually 2–3 cm

Diet Algae, small insects and microcrustaceans

Notes This species was first recorded by scientists in the Oenpelli area, hence the name Arnhem Land blue-eye. It is closely related to the spotted blue-eye, *P. gertrudae*, which is also found in Kakadu.



Common name MARIANA'S HARDYHEAD

Aboriginal names Dilebang or Dohlbo

Scientific name *Craterocephalus marianae*

Distribution Restricted to the South and East Alligator River systems across to at least the Mann River

Habitat Shallow sandy creeks of the lowlands and headwaters; occasionally found in some shallower lowland billabongs

Size Up to 8 cm, usually about 4 cm

Diet Insects, microcrustaceans and algae

Notes This species was described only recently, originally being confused with another species. It can often be seen in large schools scooping up and spitting out sand in search of food. The mouth extends downwards to enable this habit of feeding. The eggs have adhesive filaments for attachment to underwater objects.



Common name FLY-SPECKED HARDYHEAD
Aboriginal names Dilebang or Dohlbo
Scientific name *Craterocephalus stercusmuscarum*
Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north-east coast drainages; also found in the Murray–Darling system and in freshwater lakes on Fraser Island
Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu, rarer in escarpment perennial streams
Size Up to 10 cm, usually 3–4 cm
Diet Aquatic insects, small crustaceans, algae
Notes This species has an extended breeding season from the late-Dry to the mid-Wet. The females with eggs rub against rocks, perhaps to force the eggs out and the males usually wait just behind to fertilise the eggs.



Common name SAIL-FIN GLASSFISH,
SAIL-FIN PERCHLET
Aboriginal name Na-rranggi
Scientific name *Ambassis agrammus*
Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north east coast drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea
Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu
Size Up to 7 cm, usually 3–4 cm
Diet Microcrustaceans, aquatic insects, algae
Notes Glassfish are so called for their transparent body. They are abundant in Kakadu and the Northern Territory and can be seen at road crossings and culverts in massive numbers moving upstream during the Wet season, presumably to seek refuge in perennial creeks and waterholes.



Common name PENNYFISH

Aboriginal name Na-rranggi

Scientific name *Denariusa bandata*

Distribution Timor Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria and some north east coast drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat Most common in smaller streams and billabongs of the floodplains and lowlands

Size Up to 4 cm, usually 2–3 cm

Diet Aquatic insects and microcrustaceans

Notes Pennyfish like to live among dense vegetation in streams and swamps. They look similar to glassfish but have different colouration (as well as 5–7 vertical stripes on the sides), a slightly different shape and tend to move slower. Little is known about the biology of pennyfish.



Common name BARRAMUNDI

Aboriginal names Malarlalk (J) and Na-marngorl (A)

Scientific name *Lates calcarifer*

Distribution All large north Australian coastal rivers; tropical Indo-Pacific region, from China to the Persian Gulf

Habitat Common in floodplain and lowland billabongs, rarer in the headwaters

Size Up to 180 cm, usually 60–70 cm

Diet Mainly fish and larger crustaceans

Notes Catadromous. Barramundi migrate from freshwater to the estuaries after 3–5 years. The males change into females 2–3 years later (when about 70 cm in length). Undoubtedly the Northern Territory's most popular sport fish, also supporting a large commercial fishery. Juveniles have a distinct white stripe on the head.



Common names SARATOGA,
NORTHERN SPOTTED BARRAMUNDI

Aboriginal names Yinmamarra (J); Guluibirr (A)

Scientific name *Scleropages jardinii*

Distribution Timor Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat Floodplains and lowlands, rarer in the headwaters

Size Up to 100 cm, usually 50–70 cm

Diet Insects, plants and small fish

Notes The Northern Territory's only primary freshwater fish that has evolved completely in freshwater and belongs to a family that dates back to Eocene times (50 million years BP). The female carries the eggs and young in the mouth. The saratoga is also a popular sport fish.



Common names TARPON, OX-EYE HERRING

Aboriginal name Garlalba

Scientific name *Megalops cyprinoides*

Distribution Most coastal rivers of northern Australia; in the tropics from east Africa across the Indian Ocean to South-East Asia, north to Japan, east to Tahiti; also Papua New Guinea

Habitat Floodplains and lowlands, rarer in the headwaters

Size At least 100 cm, 20–50 cm in freshwaters

Diet Fish, insects and crustaceans

Notes Catadromous. A good fighting sport fish taking surface lures or flies. Under the skin is a network of very fine bones which makes this fish difficult to eat. The flesh is soft and fairly unpalatable. Tarpon can tolerate low water oxygen levels by sucking air into the mouth.



Common names BONY BREAM,
BONY HERRING

Aboriginal names Na-bardebarde or Garlalba

Scientific name *Nematalosa erebi*

Distribution Indian Ocean, Timor sea and Gulf of Carpentaria drainages; inland in the Murray-Darling River, Lake Eyre and Bulloo drainages; also in Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 50 cm, usually 20–30 cm

Diet Algae, detritus, insects and small crustaceans

Notes Large females may lay several hundred thousand tiny eggs. This fish is often found in schools in shallower water and can be seen 'pecking' at the sandy bottom and spitting out the sand whilst in search of food.



Common names EMPIRE GUDGEON,
CARP GUDGEON

Aboriginal name Bigodjmalemale

Scientific name *Hypseleotris compressa*

Distribution Coastal streams of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory, and north-western Australia; also in Papua New Guinea

Habitat Mainly floodplain areas, rarer in the lowlands

Size Up to 10 cm, usually about 5 cm

Diet Microcrustaceans and insects

Notes During breeding the male becomes very colourful with red, white and blue bands on the fins and a bright orange lower body. Males select a territory, attract a female and will guard the eggs after spawning. Each female may mate with more than one male at a spawning session.



Common name PURPLE-SPOTTED GUDGEON

Aboriginal names Djagolk or Gomboh

Scientific name *Mogurnda mogurnda*

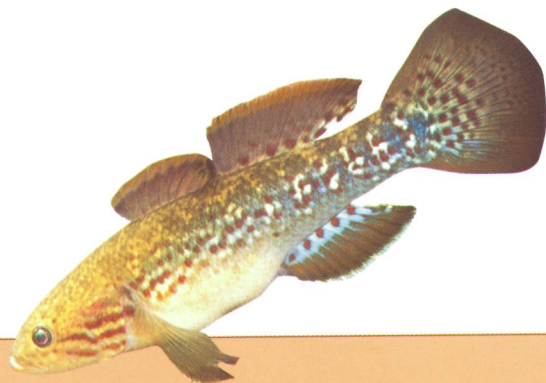
Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria, north-east coast drainages and areas of the Lake Eyre drainage; also in Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 20 cm, usually 5–10 cm

Diet Insects, small crustaceans and some fish

Notes This fish is able to leap from rock ledge to rock ledge of escarpment cascades and waterfalls to colonise upstream areas that no other fish can reach. Eggs are attached to rocks and logs and the male guards and fans the eggs with the fins. Purple-spotted gudgeons have a distinctive and spectacular colour pattern. Breeding males have enlarged heads.



Common names FORK-TAILED CATFISH,
SALMON CATFISH

Aboriginal names Gonjgonj (J) and
Al-makkawarri (A)

Scientific name *Arius leptaspis*

Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat Floodplains and lowlands, rarer in the headwaters

Size Up to 100 cm, usually 30–40 cm

Diet Insects, fish and crustaceans, almost anything, even small snakes and birds

Notes Smooth slippery skin with no scales, and sharp poisonous spines on the fins. The males carry the large eggs in the mouth. There are two other species of fork-tailed catfish in Kakadu. An important food for Aboriginal people.



Common names BLACK CATFISH,
EEL-TAILED CATFISH

Aboriginal names Binjdjarrang or Ganbaldjdja

Scientific name *Neosilurus ater*

Distribution Timor Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 50 cm, usually about 30 cm

Diet Aquatic insects, small crustaceans and detritus

Notes This is one of four species of eel-tailed catfish in Kakadu. Like fork-tailed catfish, they lack scales and have poisonous spines. Catfish get their name from sensory barbels around the mouth which resemble a cat's whiskers. The name 'eel-tailed' refers to the long tapering tail.



Common name TOOTHLESS CATFISH

Aboriginal names Ganbaldjdja (J) and Barrabarra or Na-gurl (A)

Scientific name *Anodontiglanis dahli*

Distribution Timor Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria drainages

Habitat Headwaters and lowlands, usually over sandy substrates

Size Up to 50 cm, usually 30–40 cm

Diet Mainly aquatic insects and detritus

Notes This eel-tailed catfish resembles a vacuum cleaner as it searches the substrate for food. It tends to be more solitary than most eel-tailed catfish. It is also considered good eating. This species is distinct from other eel-tailed catfish in Kakadu as its dorsal fin is much larger, reaching the dorsal spine.



Common names COMMON ARCHERFISH,
RIFLEFISH

Aboriginal name Njarlgan

Scientific name *Toxotes chatareus*

Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north east coast drainages; India, South-East Asia and Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 40 cm, usually 8–12 cm

Diet Mainly terrestrial and aquatic insects

Notes Archerfish get their name from their habit of 'shooting' insects from overhanging branches with a jet of water expelled from the mouth. This jet of water may reach up to 2 metres. When the insect lands on the water's surface the fish moves in for the kill. Larger specimens may be caught by anglers and are said to be good sport and good eating.



Common name PRIMITIVE ARCHERFISH

Aboriginal name Bodjdjalk

Scientific name *Toxotes lorentzi*

Distribution Only a few Northern Territory drainages of the Timor Sea; also in parts of southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat Headwaters, rarer in some lowland streams

Size Up to 23 cm, usually 10–12 cm

Diet Little is known about the diet of this fish; its feeding habits suggest that mainly terrestrial and aquatic insects are eaten

Notes Like the common archerfish this fish likes to lurk around the surface under overhanging vegetation looking for insects to 'shoot'. It is generally much less abundant than the common archerfish.



Common name FLATHEAD GOBY

Aboriginal name Unrecorded

Scientific name *Glossogobius giuris*

Distribution Indian Ocean, Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north-east coast drainages; also in Papua New Guinea and the Indo-Pacific area from east Africa to the Pacific Islands

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 35 cm, usually 8–12 cm

Diet Insects, crustaceans and some small fish

Notes During the breeding season the male builds or selects a nesting site and will guard and aerate the eggs. There are another two species of goby in Kakadu. One of these, the square-blotch goby, is yet to be described. Gobies are often difficult to see as they are well camouflaged against the substrate.



Common name SLEEPY COD

Aboriginal name Djurludj

Scientific name *Oxyeleotris lineolata*

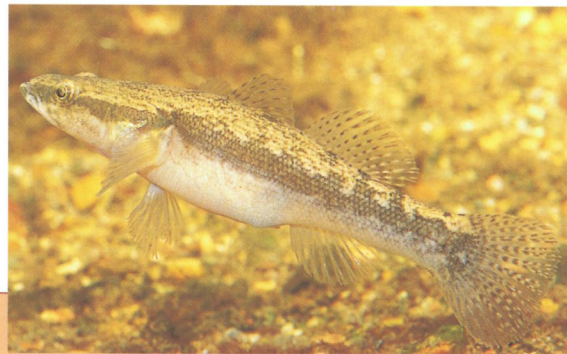
Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north-east coast drainages; also in Papua New Guinea

Habitat Floodplain and lowland waterbodies

Size Up to 50 cm, usually about 30 cm

Diet Insects, fish and larger crustaceans

Notes This fish appears very sluggish but can be surprisingly fast when striking at prey. The flesh is reportedly good eating although it is not a sport fish. There are another two species of *Oxyeleotris* in Kakadu. The black-banded gudgeon, *O. selheimi*, is very similar to the sleepy cod and is more common in billabongs and swamps.



Common names FRESHWATER LONGTOM

Aboriginal name Burrugulung

Scientific name *Strongylura krefftii*

Distribution Timor Sea, Gulf of Carpentaria and north-east coast drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu, rarer in escarpment perennial streams

Size Up to at least 75 cm, usually 30–40 cm

Diet Mainly fish, some crustaceans and insects

Notes A voracious carnivore that can be seen 'ploughing' into large schools of small fish and lurking under overhanging vegetation and amongst tree roots. The long pointed jaws have needle-sharp teeth; prey is bitten sideways and then turned end-on to be swallowed head first.



Common name MOUTH ALMIGHTY

Aboriginal names Na-rranggi or Djabelh

Scientific name *Glossamia aprion*

Distribution Timor Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria and north east coast drainages; also in southern Papua New Guinea

Habitat All three habitat types in Kakadu

Size Up to 20 cm, usually about 10 cm

Diet Insects, crustaceans and fish

Notes A very slow moving fish that often hides from (in order to ambush) or slowly stalks its prey. Breeding may occur all year round. The male scoops up the eggs (200–300) which are laid as a bundle enveloped in a fine membrane, and then incubates them in the mouth. This fish is reputedly good eating in spite of its generally small size.



Common names DIAMOND MULLET,
ORD RIVER MULLET

Aboriginal name Madjabarr

Scientific name *Liza alata*

Distribution Timor Sea drainages of north
Western Australia and the Northern Territory

Habitat Floodplain and lowlands, and
sometimes headwaters

Size Up to 57 cm, usually 35–45 cm

Diet Algae and detritus

Notes Catadromous. Large numbers of this species and other mullet may be seen around estuarine river crossings such as Cahill's Crossing. Aboriginal people catch mullet which leap over these crossings at tide changes, by 'whacking' them with sticks. They then hang the 'stunned mullet' on a waist belt.



Common name TAILED SOLE

Aboriginal name Unrecorded by linguists

Scientific name *Aseraggodes klunzingeri*

Distribution Patchy within the Timor Sea
drainage from the Victoria River across to
Kakadu; also in Papua New Guinea

Habitat Lowland sandy streams and waterbodies

Size Up to 14 cm, usually 8–10 cm

Diet Microcrustaceans and aquatic insects

Notes Soles and flounders are different from other fish, having both eyes on one side of the body. When hatched the eyes are on either side of the body. One eye migrates to the other side as the fish matures. This fish is well camouflaged, having a remarkable resemblance to a fallen leaf. It is also nocturnal.



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