

Scalefish: Managed Species

Southern Garfish (*Hyporhamphus melanochir*) Garies, Gardies, Beakies



	Grows to: 40cm
	Max age: 9 years
	Maturity: ~20cm
	Min legal size: 25cm

Stock status
Depleted

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Management Challenges

Population Structure: Garfish along Tasmania's north and east coasts show differences in size, age, and spawning times. This suggests there may be separate populations. However, because there is no firm evidence, stock assessments currently treat garfish as one statewide population.

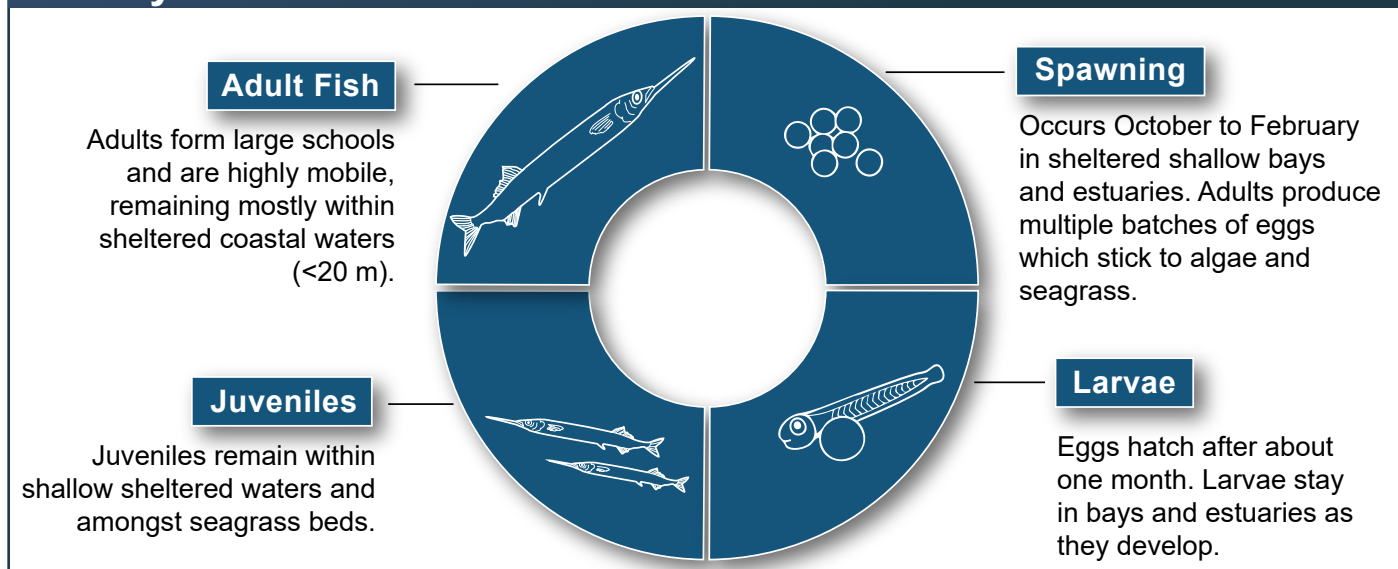
Biological Information: The most detailed study of garfish in Tasmania was done in the 1990s. Since then, sampling has been irregular and ad hoc. These gaps mean recent data cannot be used reliably in stock assessments

Commercial Fishery: Commercial catches averaged 80–100 tonnes per year until the mid-2000s, then declined. Since the mid-2010s, catches have stayed below 20 tonnes. Today, most commercial fishing occurs around the north coast and Flinders Island.

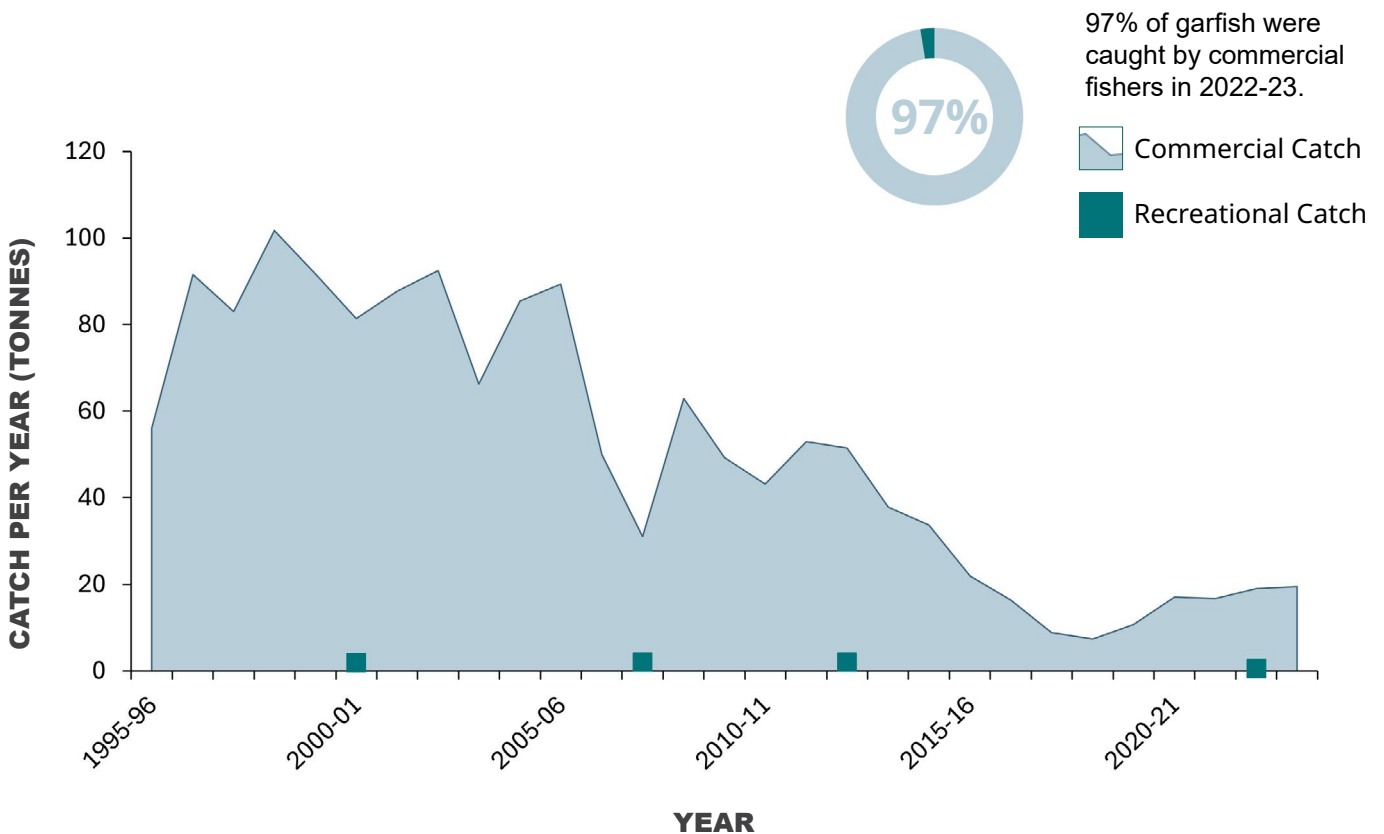
Depleted Status: Garfish is assessed as depleted due to declines in commercial catches, fluctuations in catch rates, and limited observed recovery. There is also limited age data indicating that the population is dominated by only a few year classes, meaning recruitment might be impaired.

Hyperstability: Stock assessments rely on commercial catch and effort data. However, garfish form tight schools and are easily caught, especially at night when lights attract them. This means catch rates can stay high even when fish numbers are low. For this reason, catch data alone is not a reliable indicator of overall population size.

Life Cycle



Commercial and Recreational Catches in Tasmania



* Recreational catch data is derived from IMAS fisher surveys conducted approximately every 5 years.

Historical Management Changes

	Size Limit	Recreational	Commercial	Spawning Closure
1998	25cm			
2001		Bag Limit: 30 (other scalefish)		
2004		Bag Limit: 30		
2009				Commercial Statewide: 15 Nov to 14 Dec
2010				Commercial Regional: South: 15 Nov to 14 Dec North: 15 Jan to 14 Feb
2015		Bag Limit: 15		
2022				All Sectors Regional: South: 15 Nov to 14 Dec North: 15 Jan to 14 Feb
2023				Trip Limit: 300kg