

Fish Identifier

Fish identified at the Bremner Road Saltmarsh and Mangrove Habitat

(All images by Bob Crudgington)



Fish Identification

Given the need to keep fish alive and transferred back to the water as soon as possible, it can be difficult to identify fish to species level, particularly if they are a juvenile specimens. Reference photographs are one way many of the fish can be identified. Of course there is no substitute for experience in the field!



Resident Species (common species)

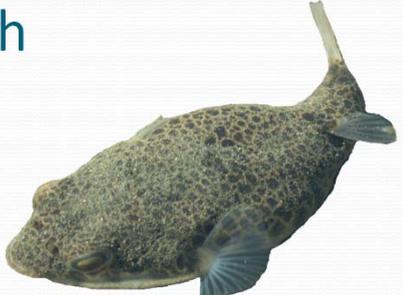
There are a number of common or resident species associated with the mangrove and saltmarsh habitat and waterways of South East Queensland. They include toadfish, the estuary perchlet, mullet, gobies, blue eyes and the southern herring. The following slides are representative of these fish obtained during the fyke net program at Bremner Road Saltmarsh.



Common Toadfish

Tetractenos hamiltoni

One of the most conspicuous fish in the mangrove and saltmarsh habitat. They are often seen lining up at the edge of the incoming tide and are the first to take advantage of the inundating saltmarsh. Well camouflaged with a mesh-like pattern they range in size from 5 – 15 cm in length.



Silverbidddy

Gerres subfasciatus

This is a very common juvenile associated with the mangrove saltmarsh habitat. The adult forms schools in the intertidal flats and shallow estuary waters of Moreton Bay. They often form part of the by-catch of the local prawn trawling industry. They can grow to 25 cm, but the juveniles are more likely to be in the 1 – 10 cm range.



Estuary Perchlet

Ambassis marianus

The estuary perchlet is very common in the mangrove saltmarsh habitats. They form large schools in the waterways and channels found throughout the wetland areas and will move in over the saltmarsh during spring tides in order to take advantage of the extra food available (including crab larvae). They can grow to a length of 10 cm.



Gobies

The gobies are one of the most common fish species and are found in most marine habitats from saltmarsh to mangrove to reefs in Moreton Bay. Generally they are small fish growing up to 5 cm.



Eye-tailed Mangrove Goby

Mugilogobius platystomus

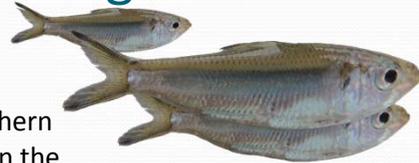
There are a number of gobies likely to turn up in fyke nets bordering saltmarsh areas. They can be very difficult to tell apart. The eye-tailed mangrove goby is quite distinctive with its black check like markings along its body and tail.



The Southern Herring

Herklotsichthys castelnaui

Juvenile specimens of the Southern Herring can be quite common in the waterways of the mangroves saltmarsh habitat. They form schools in the drains and are usually between 5 and 10 cm in length. Adults in the bay can reach 20 cm in length.



Sea Mullet

Mugil cephalus

Mullet are very common in the waterways associated with mangroves and saltmarsh. The juveniles form shoals in the shallow waters and range in size from 1 or 2 cm to 15 cm. Adults can get quite large and are often seen jumping out of the water in creeks and tidal flats.



Gudgeons

Butis butis

The Crimsontip Gudgeon is an ambush predator associated with the vegetation around mangrove and saltmarsh drains. They generally grow to around 10 cm but can reach 18 cm in length.



Mangrove Pipefish

Hippichthys penicillus

Related to the seahorse these cryptic fish shelter amongst mangrove roots and the vegetative structure of the saltmarsh. They have a distinctive white stripe down their side and can grow to 18 cm in length.



Striped Butterfish

Selenotoca multifasciata

These distinctive fish have juveniles associated with shallow estuaries including mangrove and saltmarsh habitats. The juveniles range from 5 to 15 cm in length but adults can reach 40 cm in length.



Winter Whiting

Sillago maculata

The winter whiting is just one species of whiting known to inhabit mangrove and saltmarsh habitats as juveniles. The characteristic blotches on its sides is an easy way to tell it apart from its close relative the summer whiting (*S. ciliata*).



Yellowfin Bream

Acanthopagrus australis

This is a very common fish in Moreton Bay with the adults found in many inshore habitats. They are an important commercial and recreational fishing species. The juveniles inhabit shallow estuaries including mangrove lined creeks. They are known to enter saltmarsh habitats on spring tides.



Ponyfish

There are a number of very similar species known as Ponyfish. The juveniles appear in the mangrove saltmarsh habitats in large numbers making them difficult to differentiate into species. Two common species are *Leiognathus equus* and *L. decorus*. It can be good practice just to record them as *Leiognathus* species so they can be returned quickly and unharmed to the water.



Crescent Perch

Terapon jarbua

The trumpeters or grunters are striking fish with vivid colouration and an impressive set of spiny fins. The juveniles of the Crescent Perch can be encountered in the mangrove saltmarsh habitat. Fully grown specimens can reach 30 cm in length.



Lutjanid species

Lutjanus fulviflamma

The mangrove saltmarsh habitat is an important nursery site for many species including reef fish like the perches. The photo on the right is a juvenile Dory Snapper. It was around 5 cm in length. When they are fully grown adults can be as long as 50 cm.

