

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory - Angalarri Grunter

Angalarri Grunter

Scortum neili

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976



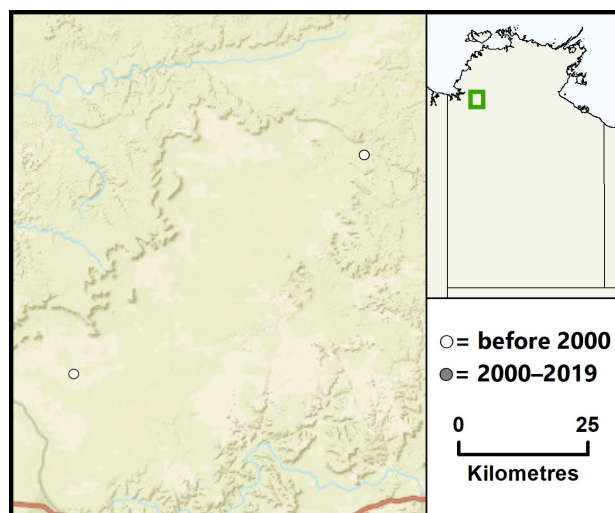
Description

The Angalarri Grunter is a medium-sized fish that measures up to 40 cm long but is more typically 15 to 25 cm long. It is silver to blue-grey to slightly golden, with one to several black blotches on the flanks and pale vertical bars. It is distinguished from the other three grunter species that occur in the Timor Sea drainage by having a small mouth, the black body blotches and a combination of the following: 5–6 transverse cheek scale rows, 62–73 scales in a longitudinal series above the lateral line, and 34–40 gill rakers on the first arch¹.

Distribution

The Angalarri Grunter has only been recorded from two tributaries of the Victoria River: the Angalarri River on Bradshaw Military Field Training Area, and from the East Baines River at Limestone Gorge in Judburra / Gregory National Park¹⁻³.

NT conservation reserves where reported:
Judburra / Gregory National Park.



Known localities of the Angalarri Grunter in the NT
(nrmaps.nt.gov.au)

Ecology and life-history

Core habitat for adult Angalarri Grunter appears to be restricted to specific sections of gorge that have deep (>5 m) and wide (>20 m) pools and continuous overhanging vegetation, including rainforest elements, and a substrate comprised of large rocks and crevices¹. Juveniles have been recorded in floodplain environments; this is likely seasonal and part of general dispersal.

The diet appears to mainly comprise vegetative matter, especially algae. The species has been reported to occur in schools of up to 25

individuals, sometimes in association with other species including Jenkins Grunter *Hephaestus jenkinsi*¹.

Threatening processes

The main potential threats to the Angalarri Grunter are degradation of riparian vegetation (due to altered fire regimes and/or impacts of livestock and feral animals) and alteration of water flow and quality (due to increased erosion as a consequence of poor land management).

The main known site, which is on the Angalarri River, is zoned for limited use within the Department of Defence's Bradshaw military training area, and the other site is protected within Judbarra / Gregory National Park.

Conservation objectives and management

The main management priorities for the Angalarri Grunter are to: i) ensure protection of known core refuge habitats at both the site- and regional-scale by undertaking appropriate fire management, feral animal control and by reviewing land use activities; and ii) monitoring and developing a deeper understanding of the species' ecology, including its dispersal movements.

The primary conservation objective for the Angalarri Grunter is to establish a monitoring program at the known sites.

References

¹ Corbett, L., Batterham, R., Sewell, S. 1999. Bradshaw field training area. Additional studies: Angalarri grunter. Report to Department of Defence. ERA Environmental Services Pty Ltd, Darwin.

² Midgley, S.H. 1981. A biological resources study of the Victoria River, Fitzmaurice River, and the Keep River. Report to the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

³ Allen, G.R., Larson, H.K., Midgley, S.H. 1993. A new species of *Scortum* Whitley (Pisces: Terapontidae) from the Northern Territory, Australia. The Beagle 10, 71-74.