

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

ANGALARRI GRUNTER

Scortum neili

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: L. Corbett, MAGNT

Description

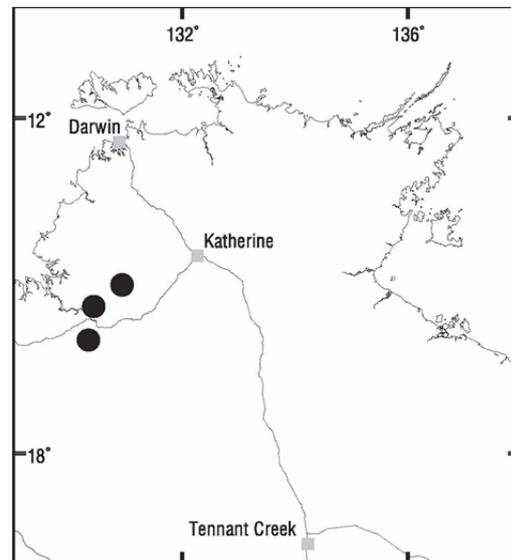
The Angalarri grunter is a small (15- 25cm long) fish, uniformly silver-grey coloured other than for a few black blotches and pale vertical barring. It is distinguished from the other 3 grunter species in the Timor Sea drainage by a combination of the number of transverse cheek scale rows (5 or 6), scales in a longitudinal series above the lateral line (62-73) and gill rakers on the first arch (34-40) (Corbett *et al.* 1999).

Distribution

The Angalarri grunter has been recorded only from an upper tributary of the Angalarri River (Bradshaw station, Victoria River District) and from one individual at Limestone Gorge on the East Baines River (Midgley 1981; Allen *et al.* 1993; Corbett *et al.* 1999). Both localities are part of the Victoria River system.

Conservation reserves where reported:

Gregory National Park.



Known locations of the Angalarri Grunter
● = post 1970

Ecology

The species appears to be restricted to a few deep (>5 m), wide (>20 m) pools, with a continuous overhanging vegetation, including rainforest elements, and a substrate comprising large rocks and crevices (Corbett *et al.* 1999).

The diet appears to be mainly vegetative matter, especially algae. It has been reported to occur in schools of up to 25 individuals, sometimes in association with other species including Jenkins grunter (*Hephaestus jenkinsi*) (Corbett *et al.* 1999).

Conservation assessment

Conservation assessment is hampered by the lack of any information on trends or threatening processes. There has been a reasonably substantial sampling of the river systems in the Victoria River District - sufficient to suggest that the species is highly localised.

Its status best fits **Vulnerable** (under criterion D2) based on:

- an area of occupancy <20km²; and
- known from <5 locations.

Threatening processes

The main potential threats are possibly 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, 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 Gregory National Park.

Conservation objectives and management

The managing authority for this species is the Fisheries Section of the Department of Business Industries and Development.

The main research priorities are to;

- (i) better define the distribution and status of this species and
- (ii) to assess the impacts of a range of putative threatening processes.

Such information is needed before management prescriptions can be formulated appropriately.

Management priorities are to:

- (i) establish a monitoring program at the known sites.

Compiled by

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References

- Allen, G.R., Larson, H.K., and Midgley, S.H. (1993). A new species of *Scortum* Whitley (Pisces: Terapontidae) from the Northern Territory, Australia. *The Beagle* **10**, 71-74.
- Corbett, L., Batterham, R., and Sewell, S. (1999). *Bradshaw field training area. Additional studies: Angalarri grunter*. Report to Department of Defence. (ERA Environmental Services Pty Ltd, Darwin.)
- 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 Industry and Fisheries.

when possible, to carry out a survey for the species