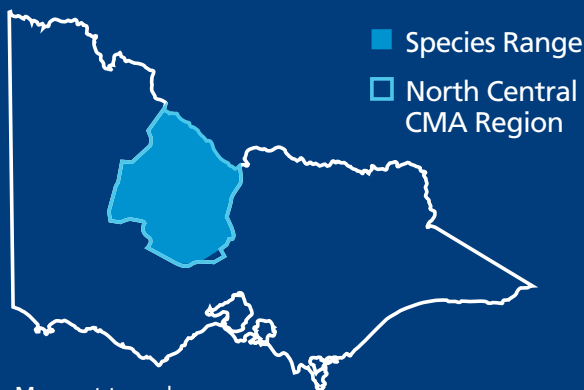


# Australian Smelt (*Retropinna semoni*)

Tail fin shape



Map not to scale



**Family:** Retropinnidae

**Other common names:** Smelt

**Description:** The Australian Smelt is a small, slender, elongated fish. The eyes are large, and the body is silvery to almost transparent, at times with a silvery orange lateral band. Adult size is commonly 40-60 mm (maximum size is about 100 mm).

**Fins:** The dorsal, adipose, pectoral, pelvic and anal fins are present. The tail is moderately forked.

**Habitat:** Most commonly found in the upper region of the water column (pelagic), usually in slow flowing or still waters such as river channels, wetlands and lakes.

**Conservation status & distribution:** Widespread and abundant. It is not generally found in upland headwaters. It is recorded in most lowland streams within the Murray-Darling Basin.

**Breeding:** Spawning occurs during mid winter to late summer, when temperatures exceed 11-15°C. Both sexes mature at the end of their first year, and only live for two years.

**Eggs:** Mature females spawn 100 to 1000 eggs, from which discrete batches of small eggs (1 mm in diameter) are produced every three to four days. The eggs are adhesive, and are laid on aquatic vegetation. Hatching occurs in nine to ten days.

**Diet:** They feed primarily on insects, micro-crustaceans and algae.

**Threats:** Fish barriers may pose a threat to movement, this leads to fragmentation of populations.

**Interesting facts and features:** The Australian Smelt has a cucumber-like odour when freshly caught.

Spawning time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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The North Central Catchment Management Authority acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners within the region, their rich culture and spiritual connection to Country. We also recognise and acknowledge the contribution and interest of Aboriginal people and organisations in land and natural resource management.

The information on this Fact Sheet is extracted from the North Central Waterwatch Fish Field Guide. Please visit the North Central Catchment Management Authority website, [www.nccma.vic.gov.au](http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au) for more information.

