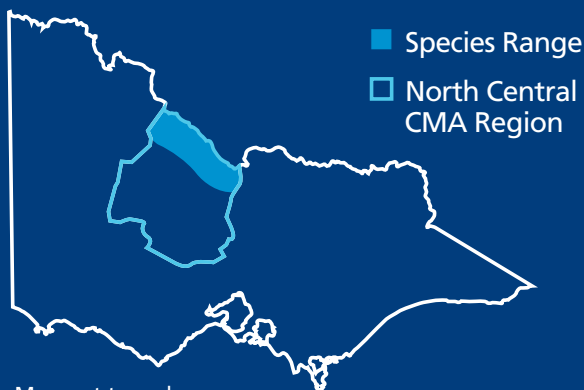


# Murray-Darling Rainbowfish (*Melanotaenia fluviatilis*)

Tail fin shape



Map not to scale



Photo Gunther Schmida

**Family:** Melanotaeniidae

**Other common names:** Crimson-spotted Rainbowfish, Murray Rainbowfish

**Description:** The Murray-Darling Rainbowfish is a small, laterally-compressed fish; it has large eyes and a small mouth. Scales are large, and colour varies with sex, age and habitat. Adults are generally silvery with greenish iridescence and a whitish lower head and belly. The adult can grow to 70 mm (maximum size is about 110 mm).

**Fins:** Dorsal, pectoral, pelvic and anal fins present. The tail is slightly forked.

**Habitat:** This family is usually tropical to sub-tropical; the Murray-Darling Rainbowfish is the most southern species of its family. Prefers slow flowing rivers, wetlands and billabongs. Can be found in association with grassy banks or submerged logs and branches where spawning occurs.

**Conservation status & distribution:** The species is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and is becoming increasingly uncommon in Victoria. Usually found in tributaries of the lowland parts of the Murray-Darling Basin in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

**Breeding:** Spawning generally occurs during spring to summer when temperatures reach 20°C. Individuals mature at 10-12 months.

**Eggs:** 20-107 eggs (1.3 to 1.8 mm in diameter) are laid in batches of 5-20 eggs, three to four times a day for several days. The eggs sink and stick to aquatic plants through their adhesive thread. Hatching occurs after one week.

**Diet:** Eats aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates and some algae.

**Threats:** Predation of adults by Redfin Perch and larvae by Eastern Gambusia are potential causes. Other threats include cold water pollution and loss of aquatic vegetation.

**Interesting facts and features:** Numbers are dramatically reduced during winter droughts when temperatures fall below 10°C.

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.

