

# SILVER TREVALLIES (2023)

*Pseudocaranx georgianus*, *Pseudocaranx* sp. "dentex" & *Pseudocaranx wrighti*, *Pseudocaranx dinjerra*



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## STOCK STATUS OVERVIEW

Jurisdiction	Stock	Stock status	Indicators
Western Australia	Western Australia	Sustainable	Catch, effort, CPUE, Catch MSY, mean lengths
Queensland	Queensland	Undefined	Catch
Victoria	Victoria	Undefined	Catch, effort, CPUE
Tasmania	Tasmania	Sustainable	Catch, effort
South Australia	South Australia	Sustainable	Catch, effort, CPUE

## STOCK STRUCTURE

Silver Trevallies comprises a complex of species that inhabits estuarine and coastal waters (depths of 10–230 m) throughout southern temperate Australia, from southern Queensland, south through New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and southern and central Western Australia [Smith-Vaniz and Jelks 2006; Bearham et al. 2020].

The biological stock structure of Silver Trevallies is uncertain. Fisheries are based on a species complex that varies by region, with *Pseudocaranx georgianus* present in all jurisdictions except Queensland, *Pseudocaranx wrighti* present in all jurisdictions except Queensland and New South Wales, *Pseudocaranx dinjerra* only present in Western Australia, and *Pseudocaranx* sp. 'dentex' only present in Queensland [Smith-Vaniz and Jelks 2006; Gomon et al. 2008; Bearham

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et al. 2020]. Investigations of population connectivity and post-settlement movement are also limited. Despite a fast swimming ability, tag-recapture studies in Western Australia, New South Wales and New Zealand indicate restricted post-settlement movement of *P. georgianus*, potentially leading to ecological stock structuring over moderate (hundreds of kilometres) spatial scales [James 1980; Fairclough et al. 2011; Fowler et al. 2018].

Here, assessment of stock status is presented at the jurisdictional level—Commonwealth, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

## STOCK STATUS

**Queensland** Catch and effort data for Silver Trevallies (*P. sp. 'dentex'*) in Queensland are poor. Commercial and charter catches of Silver Trevallies are not reported specifically, and the species is included as part of a broader 'Trevally-unspecified' category. Silver Trevallies were reported specifically in recreational fishing surveys up until 2013–14 and approximately 2000 fish were landed [Webley et al. 2015]. They are no longer reported separately in the statewide survey owing to the uncertainty in species identity. It is unlikely that the combined commercial and recreational catches exceeded 10 t in 2021–22. Silver Trevallies are not subject to size restrictions, although a combined recreational possession limit of 20 applies to members of the Carangidae family. There is insufficient information available to confidently classify the status of the stock.

On the basis of the evidence provided above, Silver Trevallies in Queensland is classified as an **undefined stock**.

**South Australia** In South Australia, Silver Trevallies are taken by fishers in South Australia's commercial multi-species, multi-gear and multi-sectoral Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF) and by recreational fishers [Smart et al. 2023]. Few commercial fishers actively target these species. Total annual commercial catch has been highly variable ranging from 4 t in 2003–04 to 22 t in 2000–01. Since 2009–10 total commercial catch has averaged 9 t per year and was 9 t in 2021–22. Commercial handline effort reduced by 39%, to 503 fisher-days in 2021–22, which breached the lower trigger reference point for the greatest inter-annual change [Smart et al. 2023]. As a result of the reduction in annual handline effort and consistent catches, handline CPUE for 2021–22 was the highest in 12 years.

The recreational catch is taken using rod and line and comprised 64% of the combined recreational and commercial State-wide catch in 2021–22 [Beckmann et al. 2023]. The State-wide recreational survey in 2021–22 estimated that 37,760 Silver Trevallies were captured by the recreational sector, of which 33,104 fish were harvested. The estimated total recreational harvest weight was 15 t [Beckmann et al. 2023]. In the Charter Boat Fishery, 5,418 Silver Trevallies were retained which comprised 7.2% of all species caught in 2020–21 [Durante et al. 2022].

There is no information available on the catch of Silver Trevallies by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australian waters.

The above evidence indicates that the biomass of this stock is unlikely to be depleted and that recruitment is unlikely to be impaired. Furthermore, the above evidence indicates that the current level of fishing mortality is unlikely to cause the stock to become recruitment impaired.

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**Tasmania**

In Tasmanian waters, Silver Trevallies (only *P. georgianus* recorded) are byproduct species of the Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery, caught predominately using gillnet, mesh net and beach seine gears. Recorded commercial catches have been low, with a maximum of 11.36 t recorded in 2020 and an annual average of approximately 4.5 t recorded over the past ten years. The total recorded commercial catch in 2021–22 was 5.27 t [Sharples et al. 2023]. Commercial catch and effort appear to show a positive relationship, but given that the species are not actively targeted, catch rates are not considered to provide a reliable index of relative abundance.

Four estimates of recreational catches using line and gillnet methods since 2000–01 were generally higher than those of the commercial sector, varying between a low of 1.9 t in 2012–13 and a peak of 8.5 t in 2017–18 [Lyle et al. 2019]. In comparison to other jurisdictions, total catch and effort in Tasmania appear to be low, indicating that the biomass of this stock is unlikely to be depleted and that recruitment is unlikely to be impaired. The data further indicate that the current level of fishing mortality is unlikely to cause the stock to become recruitment impaired.

On the basis of this evidence, Silver Trevallies in Tasmania are classified as a **sustainable stock**.

**Victoria**

In Victoria, 100–300 t of Silver Trevallies were landed in Bass Strait using mesh nets from 1978–79 to 1991–92; after which the offshore mesh net fishery has been managed by the Commonwealth. Since this transition, commercial landings have been a by-product predominantly from seine netting targeting other species in Corner Inlet-Nooramunga, and previously in Gippsland Lakes, and Port Phillip Bay with a declining catch trend through time as effort with this gear reduced until the latter two fisheries were closed two years ago following licence buy-outs [Bell et al. 2023]. Landings have been around 50 t or less for the last ten years, with the lowest on record of 8.4 t in 2021–22. Silver Trevallies are targeted as well as caught as by-product by recreational fisheries throughout the state but there is no quantitative information on recreational landings as they are rarely encountered in creel or angler diary monitoring programs.

There has been high variability in the CPUE of Silver Trevallies from seine netting in Corner Inlet-Nooramunga, the only current source of reliable data. This variability is likely to reflect varying abundance in inshore waters as Silver Trevallies use seagrass beds in the inlet as nursery grounds. Catch rates, while variable, peaked between around 1998 and 2008, but have subsequently declined to approximate the levels observed prior to 1998. However, the large interannual fluctuations in nominal CPUE indicate that the actual trend is uncertain [Bell et al. 2023].

The low landings of Silver Trevallies in recent years arising from low seine netting effort in Victoria implies that fishing operations within Corner Inlet-Nooramunga are unlikely to be causing impaired recruitment under current practices. Landings will likely remain low statewide for the Victorian managed fishery due to the closure of most bay and inlet commercial fisheries and because commercial effort in Corner Inlet-Nooramunga is generally not targeted towards Silver Trevallies. As Silver Trevallies move sporadically into Corner Inlet-Nooramunga from Bass Strait from year to year, the performance of the stock is

linked to the status of the Commonwealth fishery, and potentially other fisheries in south-eastern Australia. In this context, it is unlikely the commercial fishery in Corner Inlet-Nooramunga and the recreational take statewide are causing substantial depletion or, individually, placing the stock at risk of becoming recruitment impaired [Bell et al. 2023].

Although, the above evidence indicates that the current level of fishing mortality in Victoria is unlikely to be causing the stock to become recruitment impaired statewide, there is uncertainty about stock status given the extent of the stock is currently unknown, but likely to comprise a component of the adjacent Commonwealth, and potentially even New South Wales, jurisdiction(s). On the basis of the evidence provided above, Silver Trevallies in Victoria is classified as an **undefined stock**.

### **Western Australia**

The majority of Silver Trevally caught in Western Australia are assumed to be the widely distributed *P. georgianus*, with around 80–90% of the total catches landed in the last 15 years taken by the recreational fishing sector. Silver Trevally catches retained by private boat-based recreational fishers in Western Australia have decreased from around 31 t in 2011–12 to 14–18 t in the last four surveys (2013–14, 2015–16, 2017–18 and 2020–21), with the majority taken in the West Coast Bioregion [Ryan et al. 2022]. Catches of this species retained by charter tour operators in Western Australia have ranged between 0.5 and 1.5 t over the same period [Newman et al. 2023]. Nearly all of the recreational catches of Silver Trevally in the West Coast Bioregion are taken by fishers targeting demersal scalefish species like West Australian Dhufish and Snapper, which have been managed under a recovery plan aimed to reduce the exploitation of these stocks since 2010.

Commercial catches of Silver Trevallies in Western Australia peaked around 33 t in the late 1980s but have remained low (2–10 t) since 2008, when the open access line fishery in the West Coast Bioregion came under formal management. Annual catch per unit effort (CPUE) by commercial line fisheries in the West Coast and South Coast bioregions has fluctuated below 3 kg per block day, reflecting the low level of commercial targeting of this species. Recent management measures taken to substantially reduce fishing effort and catch of demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion are likely to be further limiting fishing pressure on Silver Trevallies, along with state-wide recreational regulations such as a minimum legal length and a recreational bag limit.

A data-limited Catch-MSY analysis based on annual catch data for the Western Australian stock of Silver Trevally since 1975 suggests that catches have generally been maintained below the predicted Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) of 67 t (95% CLs of 50–95 t). While uncertain and based on assumptions about the final level of depletion of the biomass (B) as a proportion of unfished biomass (0.3–0.9), the analysis indicates that the recent low catches have likely resulted in reduced fishing mortality (F) being experienced by the stock to a level well below the predicted FMSY of 0.3 year<sup>-1</sup>. The predicted depletion in 2021–22 was 0.87 of the unfished level, with the lower 95% CL well above the threshold level of 0.5, corresponding to BMSY. Despite the uncertainty, the above results are broadly consistent with earlier per-recruit estimates of Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) for Silver Trevally [Fisher et al. 2014], indicating that the biomass of this stock is unlikely to have depleted to a level at which recruitment could be impaired. This is further supported by stable mean lengths of Silver Trevallies in charter catches since 2002, with close to all fish being above the average size at maturity [Crisafulli et al. in review].

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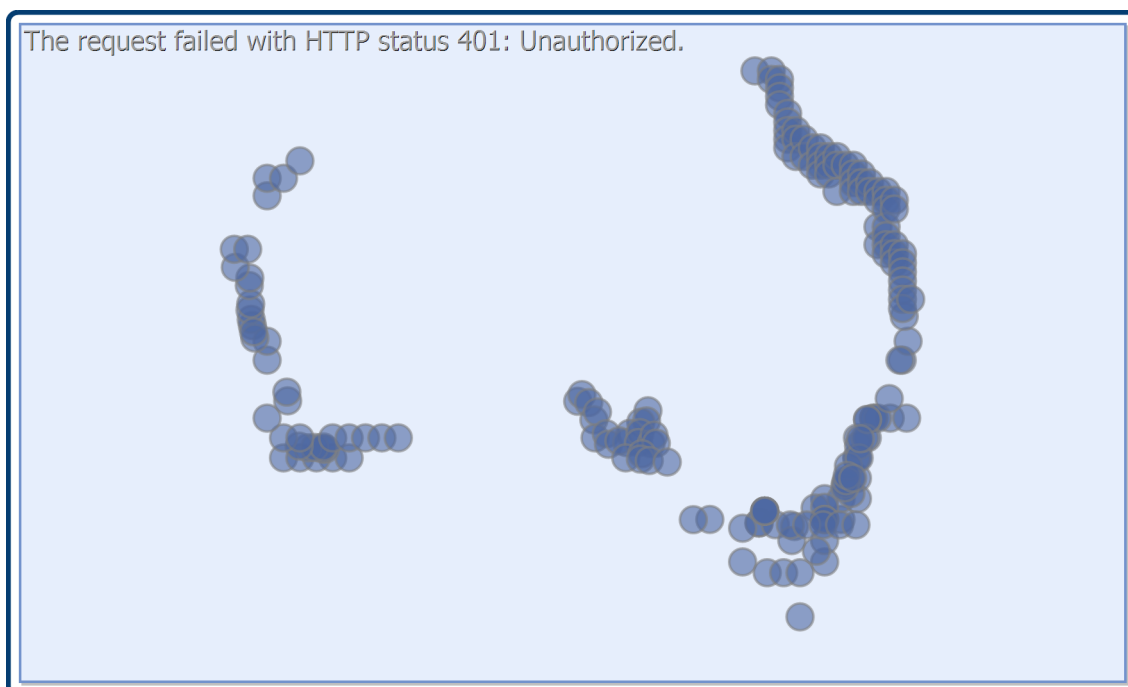
On the basis of the evidence provided above, Silver Trevallies in Western Australia is classified as a **sustainable stock**.

**BIOLOGY**

**Silver Trevallies biology** [Rowling and Raines 2000]

Species	Longevity / Maximum Size	Maturity (50 per cent)
SILVER TREVALLIES	13–18 years, 690–938 mm TL	190–200 mm TL

**DISTRIBUTION**



Distribution of reported commercial catch of Silver Trevallies.

**TABLES**

Fishing methods	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Victoria
<b>Charter</b>					
Hook and Line	✓	✓	✓		
Spearfishing					
Unspecified					
<b>Commercial</b>					
Beach Seine					

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Western Australia
✓
✓
✓
✓

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Dropline					
Fish Trap					
Gillnet				✓	
Hand Line, Hand Reel or Powered Reels					
Handline			✓		
Haul Seine					
Hook and Line					✓
Line		✓			
Net		✓			✓
Unspecified			✓	✓	
<b>Recreational</b>					
Beach Seine				✓	
Gillnet				✓	
Hook and Line	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spearfishing	✓				
Unspecified					

<b>Management Methods</b>					
	<b>Commonwealth</b>	<b>New South Wales</b>	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Tasmania</b>
<b>Charter</b>					
Bag limits		✓		✓	
Bag/possession limits			✓		
Fishing gear and method restrictions				✓	
Gear restrictions		✓	✓		
Licence		✓		✓	
Limited entry				✓	
Marine park closures					
Passenger restrictions		✓			
Possession limit					

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✓
✓
✓
✓
✓
✓
✓
✓
✓

Victoria	Western Australia
	✓
	✓
	✓
	✓
	✓



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Seasonal or spatial closures			✓		
Size limit		✓		✓	
Spatial closures		✓			
Spatial zoning					
<b>Commercial</b>					
Fishing gear and method restrictions		✓			✓
Gear restrictions	✓		✓	✓	
Harvest Strategy			✓		
Limited entry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marine park closures	✓				
Quota	✓				
Seasonal or spatial closures			✓		
Size limit		✓		✓	✓
Spatial closures	✓	✓			
Spatial restrictions				✓	
Total allowable catch	✓				
Vessel restrictions			✓		
<b>Recreational</b>					
Bag limits		✓		✓	✓
Bag/possession limits			✓		
Fishing gear and method restrictions				✓	
Gear restrictions		✓	✓		
Licence		✓			✓
Licence (boat-based sector)					



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<b>Marine park closures</b>					
<b>Possession limit</b>		✓			✓
<b>Seasonal or spatial closures</b>			✓		
<b>Size limit</b>		✓		✓	✓
<b>Spatial closures</b>		✓			

<b>Catch</b>					
	<b>Commonwealth</b>	<b>New South Wales</b>	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Tasmania</b>
<b>Charter</b>			Unknown	Unknown	
<b>Commercial</b>			0.8102 t	9.27511 t	5.2779 t
<b>Indigenous</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Recreational</b>	Unknown	27 t (2013–14)	~2 t	14.57 t (in 2013–14)	1.9 t (in 2012–13)

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	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	

Victoria	Western Australia
	1t
17.4938 t	3.1827 t
Unknown (No catch under permit)	Unknown
37 t (2003)	17 t ( $\pm$ 2 se) (in 2015–16)

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**Commonwealth – Commercial (Management Methods/Catch).** Data provided for the Commonwealth align with the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery for the 2021–22 financial year.

**Commonwealth – Recreational.** The Australian government does not manage recreational fishing in Commonwealth waters. Recreational fishing in Commonwealth waters is managed by the state or territory immediately adjacent to those waters, under its management regulations.

**Commonwealth – Indigenous.** The Australian government does not manage non-commercial Indigenous fishing in Commonwealth waters, with the exception of Torres Strait. In general, non-commercial Indigenous fishing in Commonwealth waters is managed by the state or territory immediately adjacent to those waters.

**Western Australia – Recreational (Management Methods).** In Western Australia, a licence is required to recreationally fish from a powered vessel.

**Western Australia – Recreational (Catch).** Shore based catches are unknown, thus landings would be underestimated.

**Queensland – Indigenous (Management Methods).** for more information see <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/traditional-fishing>

**Queensland – Recreational Fishing (Catch).** Data with high uncertainty (Residual Error >50 %) have been excluded and listed as unknown. More information is available at: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/monitoring-research/monitoring-reporting/statewide-recreational-fishing-surveys>

**Queensland – Commercial (Catch).** Queensland commercial and charter data have been sourced from the commercial fisheries logbook program. Further information available through the Queensland Fisheries Summary Report <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/monitoring-research/data/queensland-fisheries-summary-report>

**New South Wales – Recreational (Catch).** Murphy et al. [2022].

**New South Wales – Indigenous (Management Methods).**  
(<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/aboriginal-fishing>)

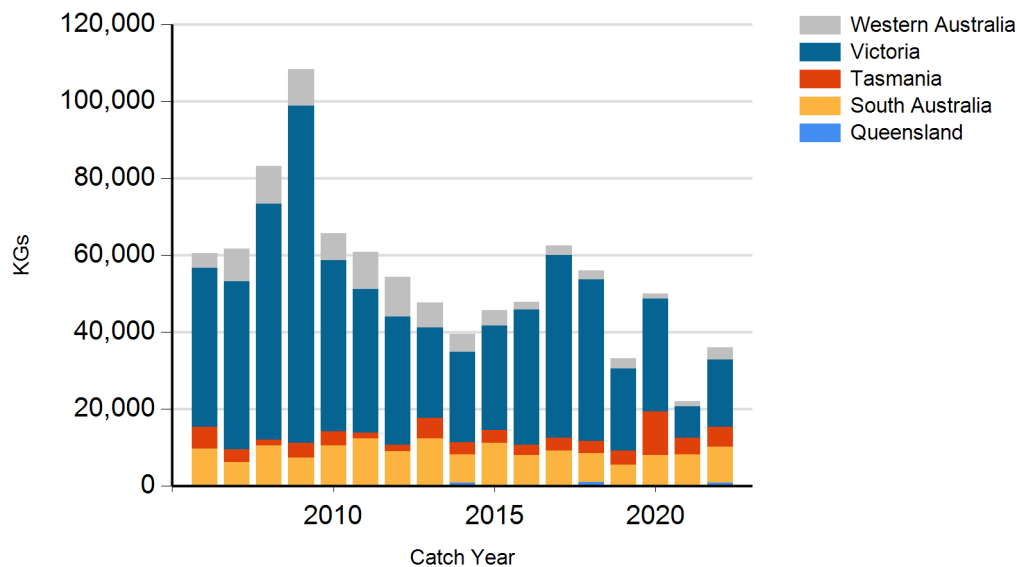
**Victoria – Commercial (Catch).** Silver trevally (*Pseudocaranx georgianus*) is not differentiated from other trevallies caught in Victorian commercial fisheries.

**Victoria – Indigenous.** A person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is exempt from the need to obtain a Victorian recreational fishing licence, provided they comply with all other rules that apply to recreational fishers, including rules on equipment, catch limits, size limits and restricted areas. Traditional (non-commercial) fishing activities that are carried out by members of a traditional owner group entity under an agreement pursuant to Victoria's *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* are also exempt from the need to hold a recreational fishing licence, subject to any conditions outlined in the agreement. Native title holders are also exempt from the need to obtain a recreational fishing licence under the provisions of the Commonwealth's *Native Title Act 1993*.

**Tasmania - Indigenous (Management Methods).** In Tasmania, Indigenous persons engaged in traditional fishing activities in marine waters are exempt from holding recreational fishing licences, but must comply with all other fisheries rules as if they were licensed. For details, see the policy document 'Recognition of Aboriginal Fishing Activities' (<https://fishing.tas.gov.au/Documents/Policy%20for%20Aboriginal%20tags%20and%20allotting%20an%20UIC.pdf>).

## CATCH CHART

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Commercial catch of Silver Trevallies - note confidential catch not shown

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