

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Brachionichthys hirsutus Spotted Handfish

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Actinopterygii (bony fish), Lophiiformes (anglerfish), Brachionichthyidae

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*: **endangered**
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Critically Endangered

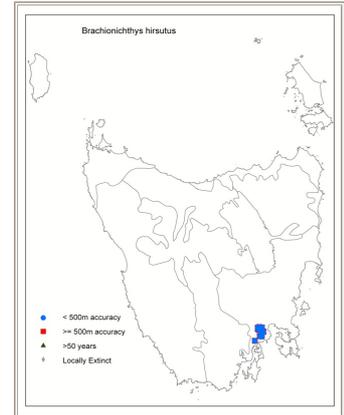
Endemic Status: Found only in Tasmania



The Spotted Handfish is endemic to Tasmania and is found in parts of the Derwent Estuary, Frederick Henry, Ralphs and North West Bays. Spotted Handfish are small (up to 120 mm long) slow moving fish which appear to walk on their pectoral and pelvic fins rather than swim. The Spotted Handfish is white, cream or brown covered in many dark brown, orange or black spots and sometimes stripes. The first dorsal fin is prominent over the head and the second dorsal fin is long extending back down to the tail.

Spotted Handfish occur in limited numbers in colonies and are usually found on soft substrates often in shallow depressions or near rocks or other projections. They are found in depths of 2 to 30 m below the surface. They eat small molluscs, crustaceans and marine worms. Spawning is from September to October, eggs are attached to objects on the substrate and the female remains in attendance until they hatch.

The small overall numbers and low population density means that the spotted handfish is vulnerable to disturbance. Threats may be predation by the exotic Pacific Seastar, loss of spawning habitat through scouring of seabed, e.g. by boat mooring chains, and water quality issues from industrial pollution, urban effluent and siltation.



Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

What to avoid

- Pollution and siltation of waterways in potential habitat.
- Scouring of spawning habitat, e.g. by slack boat mooring chains dragging across the seabed.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

Recovery Plan

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2024). *Spotted Handfish (Brachionichthys hirsutus): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Spotted-Handfish.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 3/3/2024.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.