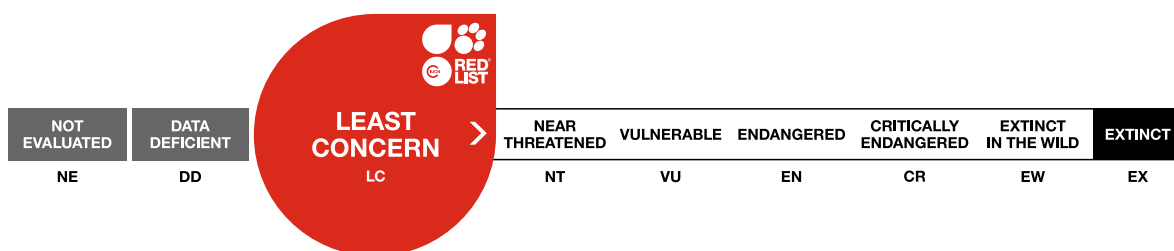


Micropogonias furnieri, Whitemouth Croaker

Assessment by: Aguilera Socorro, O., Haimovici, M., Vieira, J.P., Ruarte, C. & Rico, R.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Actinopterygii	Perciformes	Sciaenidae

Scientific Name: *Micropogonias furnieri* (Desmarest, 1823)

Synonym(s):

- *Corvina crawfordi* Regan, 1903
- *Micropogon argenteus* Cuvier, 1830
- *Micropogon barretoii* MacDonagh, 1934
- *Micropogon lineatus* Cuvier, 1830
- *Micropogon patagonensis* MacDonagh, 1931
- *Ophioscion woodwardi* Fowler, 1937
- *Sciaena opercularis* Quoy & Gaimard, 1825
- *Umbrina furnieri* Desmarest, 1823

Regional Assessments:

- Gulf of Mexico

Common Name(s):

- English: Whitemouth Croaker, Bashaw, Basher, Cro Cro, Cro-cro, Golden Croaker, Hardhead, Rocando, Ronco, West Indian Croaker, Whitemouth Drummer
- Spanish; Castilian: Corvina, Corvina Blanca, Corvina Rubia, Corvinon Rayado, Corvinón Rayado, Huaiquil, Verrugato
- Portuguese: Cascote, Cascuda, Cascudo, Corvina, Corvina-crioula, Corvina-de-arreada, Corvina-de-linha, Corvina-de-rede, Corvina-marisqueira, Corvinota, Cupá, Curuca, Cururuca-branca, Guatucupá, Marisqueira, Murucaia, Rabeta-marisqueira, Sofia, Ticopa, Ticopá, Ticupá

Taxonomic Source(s):

Eschmeyer, W.N. 2013. Catalog of Fishes. Available at: <http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/research/ichthyology/catalog/fishcatmain.asp>. (Accessed: 9 Sep 2013).

Taxonomic Notes:

According to Catalog of Fishes and Kong and Valdes (1990), *Micropogonias manni*, which is known to occur only in Chile, may be a junior synonym of *M. furnieri*. This is not correct, as *M. manni* is valid, but with *nomen dubium* (uncertain name). *Micropogonias furnieri* does not occur in Chile. Specimens collected from Lago Budi, southern Chile (N.L. Chao, 15 March 2011, deposited at the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Santiago, Chile) are distinct from *M. manni*. Taxonomic work on the East Pacific *Micropogonias* species is needed (N.L. Chao pers. comm. 2020).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern [ver 3.1](#)

Year Published: 2021

Date Assessed:

July 30, 2019

Justification:

This demersal species is widely distributed in shallow coastal waters and estuaries from Mexico to Argentina. It is long-lived and has a generation length of about 24 years. It is an important commercial fishery resource in Colombia, Venezuela, southern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. It is overexploited in Colombia and Venezuela, but a quantified decline is not available. It is also overexploited in southern Brazil with biomass declines of up to 60% occurring by the 2000s. Some conservation measures have been implemented to reduce fishing effort in recent years in Brazil. It is considered fully exploited in Uruguay and Argentina and abundance indices based on stock assessments and fishery independent scientific surveys have been increasing in recent years. Fishing effort has declined significantly due to conservation measures that include seasonal area fishing closures and total catch limits as well as reductions in targeted fishing by the coastal fleet. Global-level declines are not expected to have met a Near Threatened or threatened level at this time; therefore, it is listed as Least Concern with a strong recommendation to improve fisheries monitoring and management in areas where it is overexploited.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2015 – Least Concern (LC)

<https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2015-4.RLTS.T195076A49232972.en>

Geographic Range

Range Description:

This species is distributed in the western Atlantic in the Gulf of Mexico from Veracruz, Mexico to northwestern Cuba, in the Caribbean Sea from Cuba, Jamaica to St. Croix, and along Central and South America from southern Belize to Bahia San Blas, Argentina (Cervigon 1993, Chao 1981, Cousseau and Perrota 2013). The depth range is 0-80 metres.

Country Occurrence:

Native, Extant (resident): Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Aruba; Barbados; Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba; Brazil; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominica; Dominican Republic; French Guiana; Grenada; Guadeloupe; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Martinique; Montserrat; Nicaragua; Panama; Puerto Rico; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; Uruguay; Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of; Virgin Islands, British; Virgin Islands, U.S.

FAO Marine Fishing Areas:

Native: Atlantic - western central

Native: Atlantic - southwest

Distribution Map

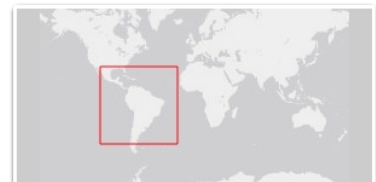


Legend

■ EXTANT (RESIDENT)

Compiled by:

IUCN Marine Biodiversity Unit/GMSA 2020



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.

Population

This species is common and abundant in the southern part of its distribution from the Doce River, southeastern Brazil to Carmen de Patagones, Argentina and is also abundant on muddy bottoms along northern Brazil. It is also very common on the Campeche Bank off Mexico in the Gulf of Mexico (M. Vega-Cendejas pers. comm. 2015). Populations of the species from northeast of Brazil to the Caribbean and Cuba and Yucatan, Mexico are not as abundant as in the south or as a target fishery resource. There are no specific fishery data on the species from those areas where it is less abundant (N.L. Chao pers. comm. 2020).

This species is overexploited in Colombia (Cancio 2006). Juveniles are landed in large numbers by trawlers targeting shrimp off the Caribbean coast of Colombia (Duarte *et al.* 2010). In Venezuela, this species is exploited by artisanal fisheries, which represented an average of 0.6% of the historic sciaenid catch over the past 13 years. It is also exploited by trawl fisheries, which represented an average of 8.4% of the historic sciaenid catch over the past 10 years. Fisheries data indicate a decline in artisanal catch and an increase in trawl catch, but the drivers behind this pattern are not understood.

In Brazil, morphological, genetic and population studies support the existence of several contiguous interrelated stocks in the region, with those south and north of Santa Marta Grande Cape having a low degree of mixture (Vazzoler 1991, Vasconcellos *et al.* 2015, Haimovici *et al.* 2016). A study using metazoan parasites as biological tags discriminated three stocks off Brazil: a northern stock is associated with Ceará and Bahia, a southeastern stock occurs in Rio de Janeiro and Santa Catarina and a southern stock occurs in Rio Grande do Sul (Luque *et al.* 2010). In southern Brazil, industrial landings peaked at 28,000 t in 2006 and declined to ca. 13,000 t in 2018, which represents a 54% decline over the past 12 years. Large artisanal unrecorded landings also occur (M. Haimovici pers. comm. 2019). However, fisheries landings and catch per unit effort (CPUE) data cannot be directly translated to abundance changes because they include vulnerabilities, biases and market factors that influence fishing (M. Haimovici pers. comm. 2020). This species was already overfished by the 2000s, with biomass reduced by 60% (Vasconcellos and Haimovici 2006). Significant numbers of young individuals are illegally harvested in the Patos Lagoon and are also often caught in pink shrimp fyke nets and discarded (Vieira *et al.* 1996, Haimovici and Cardoso 2017).

It is the main target of coastal demersal finfish fisheries in southern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina and has a large biomass compared to other sciaenid species in the Río de la Plata estuary located between Argentina and Uruguay (Pin *et al.* 2006, Haimovici and Cardoso 2017, Carozza *et al.* 2018). Targeted fishing effort towards this species intensified beginning in about 1992 to supply the demand for the export market. Landings in Argentina increased during the time period of 2003-2013 from 13,000 to 45,000 t and declined thereafter to 19,000 t in 2017 (a 58% decline over about the past 5 years), this decline can be attributed to issues related to costs, markets and mainly fleet migration to other fisheries, like shrimp, which caused declines in fishing effort (Carozza *et al.* 2019). Landings by the Uruguayan fleet were relatively stable and averaged 25,000 t annually from the 1980s to 2008, but declined thereafter to 15,000 t in 2017 (a 40% decline over about the past decade). A plan was developed in 2007 to advance the management recommendations for the area of Uruguay and Argentina and adjacent waters.

According to fishery independent scientific surveys conducted in Argentina and Uruguay, the relative

abundance of this species declined between 1991 and 2012 (Rico *et al.* 2015), stabilized in 2012 (Carozza *et al.* 2019) and increased in the 2019 survey (C. Carozza pers. comm. 2020). In addition, research cruises at Samborombón Bay (Argentina), which is considered a nursery area, recorded an increase in juvenile abundance between the years 2016 and 2019 (M. Braverman pers. comm. 2020). In 2018 and 2019, an increase in catch per unit effort in the fishing fleet was also recorded (CTMFM 2019). This trend could be due to a decrease in fishing effort in recent years as the fleet that traditionally had the greatest impact on the fishery migrated to other fisheries, such as Patagonian shrimp. Based on the most recent stock assessment (CTMFM 2019), both the surplus production model and the integrated age-structured model indicated that in 2019 there was a biomass recovery in comparison to that of 2018. According to surplus production model, the stock is not overfished, while according to the integrated model, it is fully exploited (INIDEP Researchers pers. comm. 2020). Carozza (2012) classified this species according to its life history parameters based on criteria described by King and McFarlane (2003) as an intermediate strategist, meaning it can withstand unfavourable conditions, experience fluctuations in biomass caused by interannual changes in recruitment and can migrate in search of more favourable environmental conditions. An estimation of the Steepness (h) parameter of the stock-recruitment relationship based on life history of the species (Mangel *et al.* 2010) indicated this is a resilient species with high value of h (0.94) (Ruarte 2017). These characteristics combined with its adaptive trophic strategy cause this species to be adaptable and resilient.

Current Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

This species is found over muddy and sandy bottoms in coastal waters to about 80 m depth. Young of the year are associated with river mouths and estuaries, with subadults to adults inhabiting deeper coastal areas. It is euryhaline and appears to tolerate some habitat disturbance (Bruno *et al.* 2013). It feeds on bottom-dwelling organisms, mainly worms, crustaceans and small fishes (Figueiredo and Vieira 2005).

In its southern range (southeastern Brazil to Argentina), it is known to be a multiple spawner with high fecundity and a relatively long spawning season from spring to summer. During spawning season, individuals concentrate in shallow coastal waters near freshwater runoffs (Weiss 1981, Vazzoler 1991, Macchi *et al.* 1996, Militelli *et al.* 2013). Pelagic eggs and larvae are carried into estuaries and coastal lagoons or retained in brackish waters where juveniles develop (Costa *et al.* 2013).

Growth is fast in the first 5-6 years of life, and then decreases sharply. It has also been reported to change its growth pattern in response to heavy exploitation off Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil (Haimovici and Ignacio 2005, D'Atri *et al.* 2018). Length at first maturity for females in Argentina is 34.7 cm (Militelli *et al.* 2013), 30-35 cm in southern Brazil (Vazzoler 1971, Haimovici and Ignacio 2005) and between 27.7 and 34.1 cm in southeastern Brazil (Vazzoler 1971, Santos *et al.* 2015). Age at first maturity is 2-3 years (Haimovici and Cardoso 2017). Longevity is 35-40 years (Haimovici 1977, Schwingel and Castello 1990, Cortina 1998, Haimovici and Unpierre 1996) and it has been aged to a maximum of 45 years (Carozza 2012, Santos *et al.* 2017). According to Militelli and Macchi (2016), the female age at first maturity is 3.2 years, males 2.6 years and both sexes together 2.9 years. In Argentina, natural mortality is estimated as 0.10 and 0.26 (Carozza 2012).

When applying an age at first reproduction of 2-3 years and longevity of 40-45 years, its estimated

generation length is 22-24 years based on the following equation recommended by the IUCN Red List methods: Age at first reproduction + (Age at last reproduction – age at first reproduction)/2.

Systems: Marine

Use and Trade

This species is targeted by fisheries in Colombia, Venezuela, southern Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. It is the most important coastal fish in southern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina and is targeted with gillnets and bottom trawlers both in estuarine and marine coastal regions where overall landings in 2018 amounted to ca. 64,800 t (M. Haimovici pers. comm. 2019). Off Mexico in the Gulf of Mexico, it is sometimes caught as by-catch in the shrimp trawl fishery and used for bait (M. Vega-Cendejas pers. comm. 2015). It is also taken as bycatch in shrimp trawl fisheries operating in Patos Lagoon, Brazil (Vianna and D'Incao 2006).

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

Overfishing is a major threat to this species from Colombia to southern Brazil.

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

In Argentina and Uruguay, stock assessments and fishery independent scientific surveys are regularly conducted to monitor the population. Conservation measures in both countries include area and seasonal fishery closures in spawning grounds, total allowable catch limits and a minimum landing size of 32 cm (Pin *et al.* 2006, Carozza 2012, Lagos *et al.* 2017, Carozza *et al.* 2018, Carozza *et al.* 2019). Trawling has been banned off Venezuela since 2008. In Brazil, all types of motorized bottom trawl fishing were banned up to 12 nautical miles off the coast along 623 km of Rio Grande do Sul by a law implemented in 2018. This law is expected to reduce the catch and discard of young individuals of this species as well as other commercial demersal fishes in the region. Fishing effort should be reduced in all three countries to prevent further decreases in the stock (Haimovici and Cardoso 2017). Conservation measures that include spatial fishing closures, possibly seasonal closures and limitations on effort are highly recommended for Brazil, as well as improving collection of catch data, encouraging stakeholder forums and funding enforcement of fishing regulation compliance (Cardoso *et al.* 2019). Given this species has an early maturation and high fecundity, it is expected the population would recover given the reduction of fishing pressure (M. Haimovici pers. comm. 2020).

Credits

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Authority/Authorities: IUCN SSC Sciaenid Red List Authority

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External Resources

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Appendix

Habitats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
9. Marine Neritic -> 9.4. Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy	Resident	Suitable	Yes
9. Marine Neritic -> 9.5. Marine Neritic - Subtidal Sandy-Mud	Resident	Suitable	Yes
9. Marine Neritic -> 9.6. Marine Neritic - Subtidal Muddy	Resident	Suitable	Yes
9. Marine Neritic -> 9.10. Marine Neritic - Estuaries	Resident	Suitable	Yes

Use and Trade

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

End Use	Local	National	International
Food - human	Yes	Yes	Yes

Threats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
5. Biological resource use -> 5.4. Fishing & harvesting aquatic resources -> 5.4.2. Intentional use: (large scale) [harvest]	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, significant declines	Medium impact: 6
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.4. Fishing & harvesting aquatic resources -> 5.4.4. Unintentional effects: (large scale) [harvest]	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

Conservation Actions in Place

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Action in Place
In-place land/water protection
Conservation sites identified: No
Occurs in at least one protected area: Yes
In-place species management
Harvest management plan: Yes

Conservation Actions Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Action Needed
3. Species management -> 3.1. Species management -> 3.1.1. Harvest management

Research Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Lower depth limit (m): 80
Upper depth limit (m): 0
Habitats and Ecology
Generation Length (years): 22-24

The IUCN Red List Partnership



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