



Fish Name Fact File 5

Octopus

The FRDC Fish Names Committee (FNC) is responsible for the maintenance and ongoing development of the Australian Fish Names Standard (AS 5300). The FNC makes decisions on the Standard Fish Names to be used for all species traded in Australia. Decisions made by the FNC are based on the fish name protocols that give guidance to names, and stakeholder feedback.

Most FNC decisions are straightforward and/or non-contentious but, in some cases, the background to the name selection and the FNC reasons need to be fully articulated.

This is one of a series of fact sheets about fish species that the FNC has considered and that need further explanation. The fact sheet provides the background as to how the name was selected and why it was approved.

Background to FNC Decision

There has been a considerable amount of change in taxonomy of cephalopods over recent years resulting in some change to names for Octopus species including the group name BABY OCTOPUS which has been a group name used for several unrelated species from both domestic and imported sources.

While the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has individual names for many species, they are very rarely marketed separately. A large amount of “Baby Octopus” sold in Australia is actually imported product.

The Australian Fish Names Standard has previously listed commercially important octopus groups including BABY OCTOPUS and two individual species of octopus as identified in the table below.

Octopus has been fished for over 2000 years, often as bycatch. However, octopus has increasingly been targeted with market differentiation of the species. This has necessitated changes to the Australian Fish Names Standard to add names for the two commercially important species, *Octopus australis* and *Macroctopus maorum*.

It is envisaged that additional octopus’ species will be added to the Australian Fish Names Standard (AFNS) as they gain commercial importance and market acceptability.

Affected Species and Changes to the Australian Fish Names Standard

New or changed entries

Approved Standard Fish Name	BABY OCTOPUSES	Hammer Octopus	Maori octopus
Family	Octopodidae	Octopodidae	Octopodidae
Scientific Name	<i>Amphioctopus</i> spp	<i>Octopus australis</i>	<i>Macroctopus maorum</i>
Authority		Hoyle, 1885	(Hutton, 1880)
CAAB Code	23 659903	23 659001	23 659003
FNC Application Number	App 023	App 328	App 327
Date of FNC Decision	18/06/2001	22/4/2020	22/4/2020
Redundant names or names NOT to be used	<i>Octopus aegina</i> & <i>Octopus sp. A</i>		
Notes	(previous scientific name)		

Existing and unchanged entries

Approved Standard Fish Name	OCTOPUSES	Pale Octopus	Gloomy Octopus
Family	Octopodidae	Octopodidae	Octopodidae
Scientific Name	<i>Octopus</i> spp	<i>Octopus pallidus</i>	<i>Octopus tetricus</i>
Authority		Hoyle, 1885	Gould, 1852
CAAB Code	23 659000	23 659004	23 659006
FNC Application Number	App 024	App 217	App 218
Date of FNC Decision	18/06/2001	20/11/2014	20/11/2014
Redundant names or names NOT to be used			

Further Discussion and Clarification

BABY OCTOPUSES Group

This group name was originally created for a number of species that were collectively called BABY OCTOPUS. Recent research has shown that the species that were identified in this group are not caught in Australia. As a result, the scientific name for the group has been changed from *Octopus aegina* & *Octopus sp. A* to *Amphioctopus* spp and the original CAAB Code retained.

FNC determined that the name Baby Octopus needs to be retained as the species are widely sold in Australia and the name is widely used, it is a FAO name and includes small octopus caught in SE Asia.

Maori octopus *Macroctopus maorum*

This name is widely used for the species and FNC determined that, because of its widespread and historical usage, the name should be retained. The species is caught in Australia and New Zealand.

Hammer Octopus *Octopus australis*

Hammer Octopus is a widely used name for the species although it was recognised that the name Southern Octopus is also used to refer to the species. FNC determined that the name Hammer Octopus should be adopted.

Status of the Australian Fish Names Standard

Usage of the names included in the Australian Fish Names Standard is strongly encouraged but not currently mandatory.

Usage of the Australian Fish Names Standard is listed as an Advisory Note in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.2.3 - Fish and Fish Products (see <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011C00569>).

Status of the Australian Fish Names Standard – Australian Fish for Export

Usage of the names included in the Australian Fish Names Standard is a legislative requirement.

Trade descriptions applied to fish and fish products for export as food from Australia must include the Australian Fish Name and/or scientific name detailed in the Australian Fish Names Standard

Usage of the Australian Fish Names Standard is detailed in the Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Orders – 2005 – Schedule 7 – Trade Description (see <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011C00766>)

Additional Reading

- 1) FRDC; Search the Australian Fish Names Database, (2020); www.fishnames.com.au
- 2) CSIRO Oceans and Atmosphere; CAAB Codes for Australian Aquatic Biota; ; (2020); <http://www.marine.csiro.au/oldcaab/>
- 3) Tuma, Don. (2019), Southern Seafood: A Guide to the Shellfish of Oceania / Donald Tuma Hardie Grant Media [Richmond, Victoria]
- 4) Norman, Mark Douglas & Reid, Amanda & Norman, Mark (2000). A Guide to squid, cuttlefish and octopuses of Australasia. Collingwood ; Moorabbin, Vic