

Some New Zealand species are also found in other remnants of ancient Gondwanaland (such as the inanga in Australia and South America). Most, however, are endemic (meaning found nowhere else in the world) such as the banded kokopu.

Only the male shows the colouration that gives the red-fin bully its name.

Galaxiids are named for their spotted patterning that early observers thought resembled a galaxy of stars in the night sky.

Some populations of landlocked galaxiids and bullies will spend all their life in fresh-water instead of the usual marine phase.

Native fish used to be so abundant that the earliest settlers and miners could live on giant kokopu.

The banded kokopu is usually found in native bush where there is sufficient overhead forest cover and are absent from deforested landscape of intensive agricultural areas.

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Did

7

you

know?



*Galaxiids
and Bullies*



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New Zealand has a very small freshwater fish fauna of roughly half that of a similar sized country. This may be explained in part through the extremely long period of time that New Zealand has been isolated from other countries by the barrier of the sea.

Galaxiids have no scales but a thick leathery skin instead, often with a mucous layer.

There are over 35 species of galaxiid currently identified in New Zealand.

More than 60% of New Zealand's freshwater fish are diadromous (have a marine life stage).

The giant kokopu is the largest galaxiid at up to 50cm in length.

The brown mudfish was the first of the four New Zealand mudfish to be discovered.

The common bully grows to around 110 mm long, and can live for over 3 years.

Young koaro have been known to climb 20 metre waterfalls and dams.

The male red-fin bully vigorously defends the nest in which the female has laid her eggs and which he has consequently fertilised, by turning a dark black colour and attacking all intruders regardless of sex or species.

There are seven species of New Zealand bully: blue-gilled, common, Cran's, giant, red-finned, alpine and upland.

Inanga have very wide feeding habitats, even being known to thrive on cheese in captivity!

Mudfish do not go to the sea at any time in their lives.

Galaxiids have two rows of teeth on their tongue and another two rows on the roof of their mouth!

Coarse fish, such as koi carp, grass carp, catfish, rudd, perch and tench all compete for food resources and also degrade native fish habitats.

The mudfish's ability to aestivate deep in the mud when their habitat dries up allows them to exist free from competition and predation from other species such as bullies and eels.

Rainbow and brown trout are significant competitors and also direct predators of native freshwater fish.

In many of New Zealand's freshwater fish, spawning occurs in freshwater with the young being swept downstream to live in the sea. A few months later they swim back to freshwater via a coastal stream or river mouth, and remain there for the rest of their life.

The solidly built giant bully is the largest of the bullies, commonly growing to more than 150 mm long.

The giant kokopu can live for over 30 years.

The giant kokopu was the first galaxiid described in New Zealand. It was discovered by naturalists with Captain Cook in 1773.

The five species whose young make up the whitebait catch are inanga, koaro, giant kokopu, short-jawed kokopu and banded kokopu.

Common bullies feed on small bottom-dwelling insects and crustaceans.