

## Other important rules

- > Whitebait fishing is only allowed where water levels are affected by the tide. Back pegs will mark this limit in some rivers.

It is illegal to:

- > fish for whitebait within 20 m of any tide gate, floodgate, confluence, culvert, weir or groyne, or fish from a bridge or vessel.



- > interfere with, alter, or modify the natural bed or banks of a river, stream, estuary, or channel.
- > discard or dump on shore any other fish taken when fishing for whitebait.

## Definitions

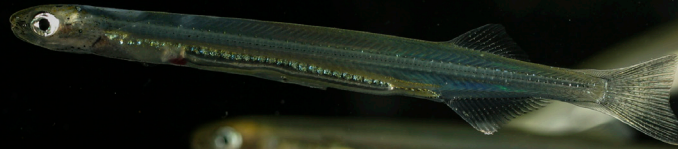
- > **confluences** (where streams and rivers meet).
- > **fishing gear** means anything that is used or is capable of being used for the purposes of fishing for whitebait (e.g., which includes screens, lines, ropes, spotter boards etc).
- > **fixed fishing gear** means any fishing gear that is set to fish for whitebait, except when used from a licensed structure (stand).
- > **groyne** (rocky walls that stick out into the waterflow, not rocky banks).
- > **licensed structure** means a structure authorised to be used for the purpose of fishing for whitebait under the Resource Management Act 1991. These are managed by regional councils.

## Penalties

Penalties for not following these regulations may result in an infringement fine of \$400.

You may also be prosecuted where the maximum penalty is \$5000.

If you are found fishing illegally, all of your gear and your catch is likely to be seized by a ranger



## For more information

Please contact your local DOC office or email [info@doc.govt.nz](mailto:info@doc.govt.nz)

## Protect New Zealand's waterways

Whitebaiting can spread invasive species including didymo (an exotic algae) and gold clam (an introduced shellfish).

You can help stop the spread by only using your fishing gear in one river this whitebaiting season, especially if you fish in the Waikato River.

For more information on gold clam and specific cleaning guidelines, visit:

[www.biosecurity.govt.nz/clam](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/clam)

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BETWEEN WATERWAYS

# The whitebaiter's guide to whitebaiting

A summary of the  
Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021



## Whitebait fishing regulations

This brochure is a guide to the Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021. It does not contain all the rules, which are on the New Zealand Legislation website – go to [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz) and search for 'Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021.' For more detailed information visit [www.doc.govt.nz/whitebaiting](http://www.doc.govt.nz/whitebaiting).

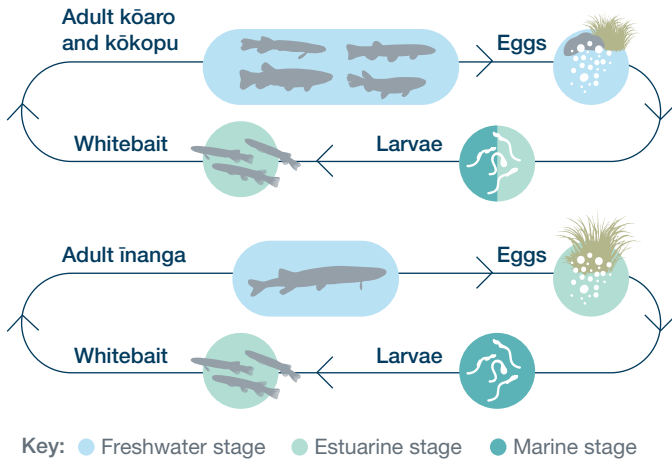
The new regulations will improve the fishery's sustainability by reducing fishing pressure on whitebait species and native fish bycatch. The regulations had not changed since the 1990s and were overdue for review.

Following these regulations is an important part of ensuring the future of whitebait species.

## What are whitebait?

Whitebait are the juveniles of six freshwater fish (īnanga, banded kōkopu, giant kōkopu, shortjaw kōkopu, kōaro and common smelt) which return upstream each spring to find suitable adult habitat. Four of these species are threatened or at risk of extinction.

## The life cycle of whitebait species



## Fishing season

The whitebait season is from 1 September to 30 October (inclusive) in all areas of Aotearoa except the Chatham Islands (1 December until the last day of February).

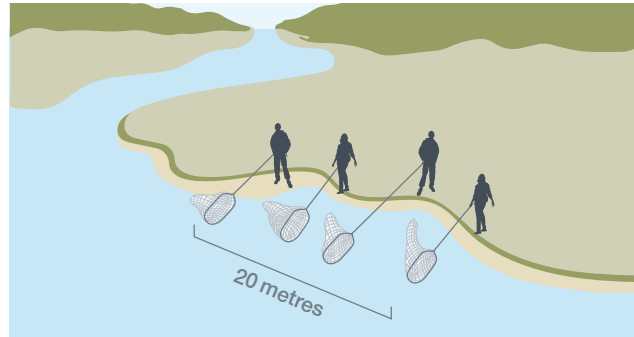
Whitebaiting is only allowed from:

- > 5 am to 8 pm, or
- > 6 am to 9 pm when New Zealand Daylight Saving is being observed.

Taking whitebait at all other times is prohibited.

## Fishing gear

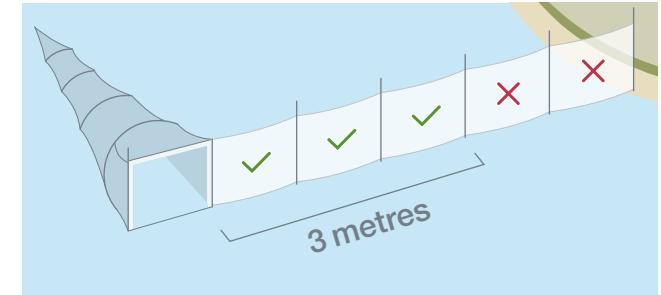
- > Fishing gear needs to be removed from the water at the end of your fishing day, and also whenever you stop fishing to take a break away from your net.
- > You must always remain within 10 m of your net.
- > Whitebait nets must not have a mouth larger than 4.5 m (measured around the inside of the net frame) and framing material wider than 120 mm. Drag nets must be no taller than 1 m in height and must be flat when laid on a flat surface. All whitebait nets must not be more than 3.5 m in length.
- > There is no minimum distance between scoop or drag nets.



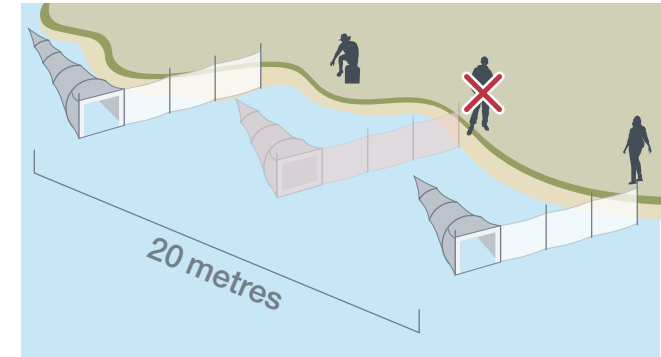
- > The maximum length of all whitebait fishing gear, whether used from a licenced structure (stands) or not, must not exceed 6 m

- > A screen is the only thing you can use to divert whitebait into your net

Screens must not be more than 3 m in length, unless used from a licenced structure (stand).



- > A minimum distance of 20 m between fixed fishing gear must be maintained at all times, except if fishing from a licenced structure.



- > Fishing gear (from either side of the channel) must not exceed more than one quarter of the width of the channel where they are set.

