

Banded kōkopu

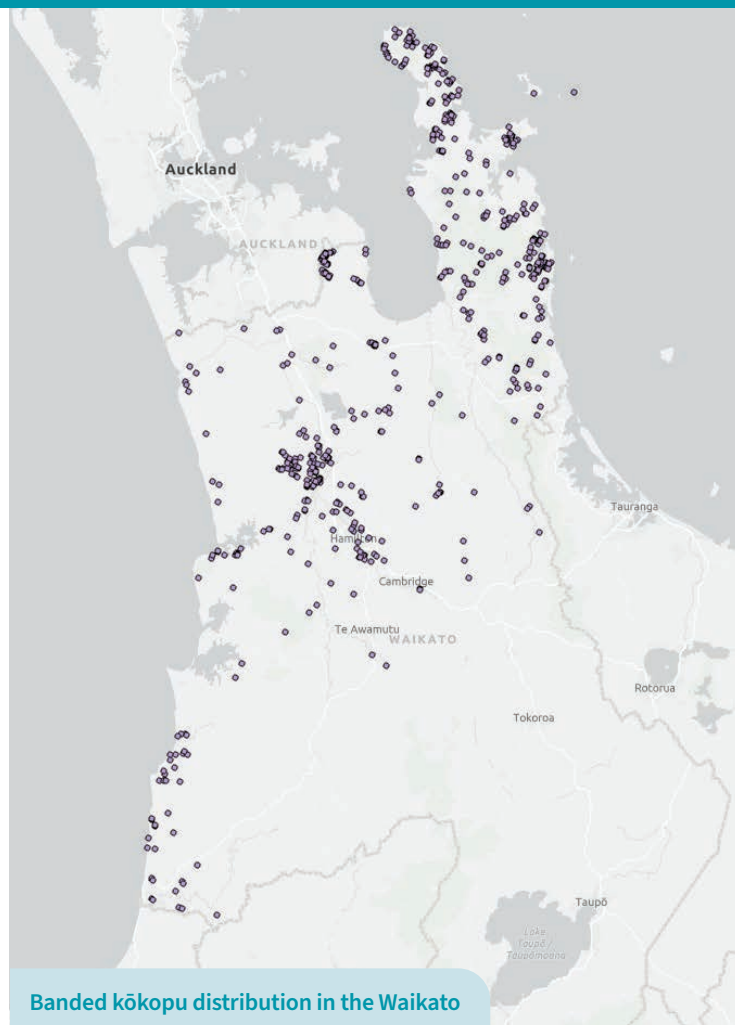
Galaxias fasciatus

Native

Not threatened

Banded kōkopu is one of five *Galaxiid* species found in the whitebait run. At the whitebait stage, banded kōkopu are excellent 'climbers' often scaling waterfalls in excess of 20 metres in height. Narrow pale vertical bands along the side of mature fish are its most characteristic feature. As juveniles, banded kōkopu can be hard to distinguish from giant kōkopu. However, juvenile banded kōkopu can often be distinguished by the bands that continue over their backs behind their dorsal fins, which giant kōkopu do not display.

Banded kōkopu can sometimes reach high abundances in very small streams, but are generally found only occasionally in Waikato streams where habitat is suitable. They typically prefer feeding in pools. Adults are typically nocturnal but sometimes can be seen on warm summer days if undisturbed. These fish prefer cooler streams with good overhead canopy and in-stream cover such as undercut banks, large rocks and organic debris. Banded kōkopu are generally found in streams close to the coast and do not penetrate very far inland despite being adept climbers as juveniles. Adult banded kōkopu typically grow to 200 millimetres, although some have been known to grow to 260 millimetres or more.



Banded kōkopu distribution in the Waikato



Photo: Bruno David



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