

Black mudfish

Neochanna diversus

Native

At risk - Declining

Black mudfish are non-migratory and spawn in the area they live (they do not have a sea-going life stage). These fish generally inhabit peat wetlands and slow-flowing drains. Black mudfish are found only in Waikato and Northland. Draining 75% of Waikato wetlands and introducing the pest fish gambusia (mosquitofish) has greatly contributed to their decline due to habitat loss and competition/predation, but they can still be found in the Whangamarino Wetland and on the Hauraki Plains.

Black mudfish have the amazing ability to aestivate (hibernate for the summer). They can survive in areas that dry out over summer by finding a damp area i.e. under a log. They seem to prefer habitats that dry out over summer, possibly to avoid eels and gambusia (mosquitofish).

Black mudfish are nocturnal, hiding during the day and feeding at night on invertebrates. This species has no scales (so oxygen can diffuse through the skin when aestivating) and is believed to live up to about 10 years old. The common adult size of black mudfish is 160 millimetres.

