

# Gambusia

## *Gambusia affini*

Introduced

Unwanted organism

An exotic fish from South America introduced into New Zealand in the 1930s, gambusia were used as an experimental control for mosquitoes. Instead, they actively compete and impact on native fish and invertebrate species. Although small, they are aggressive and known to attack native fish species, such as juvenile mudfish.

This small fish (males up to 35 millimetres, females 60 millimetres) can be seen in shoals in drains, wetland margins and many of the poorer quality Waikato lakes in summer. Gambusia can produce up to 130 live young every 4 to 5 weeks giving them the ability to overwhelm ecosystems, particularly after significant natural disasters. This is compounded by their extreme tolerance of poor water conditions (including pollutants and pesticides), preferring slow-flowing, warm water.

Possessing and/or releasing gambusia is an offence under the Biosecurity Act which can result in hefty fines.

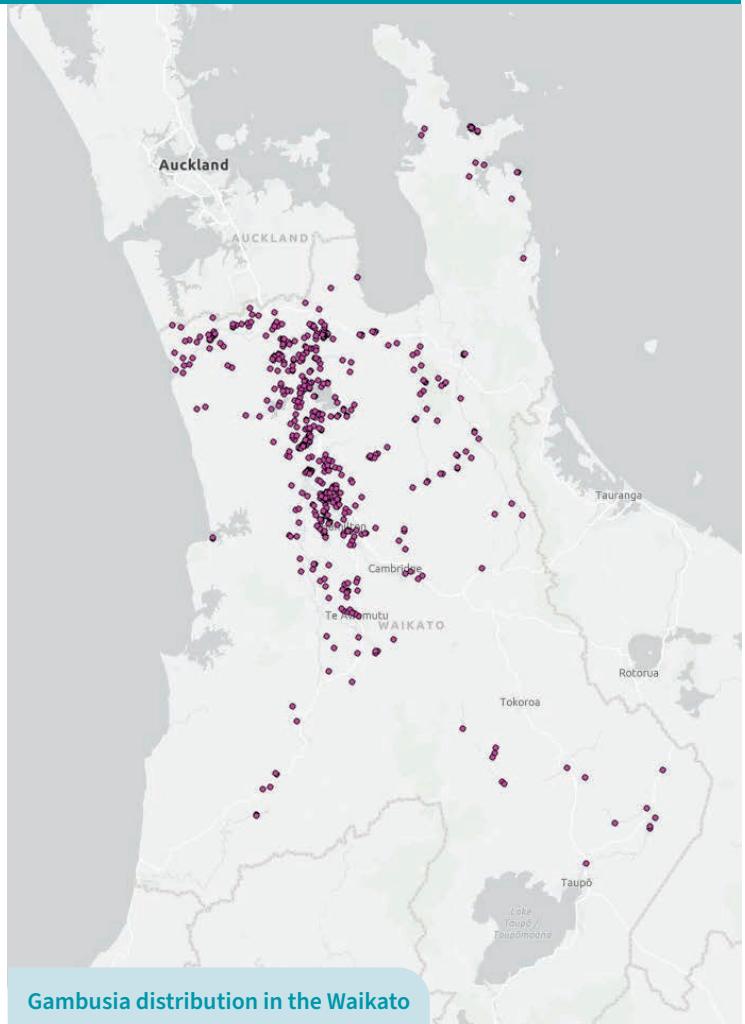


Photo: Callum Bourke



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