

Goldfish

Carassius auratus

Introduced

Undesirable

Goldfish were introduced in 1871 and are one of the most widespread exotic fish in the Waikato region. Goldfish can tolerate very poor conditions but their effect on New Zealand's aquatic environment is largely unknown. This species' reproduction habits are complex and can sometimes hybridise with closely related species such as koi carp (*Cyprinus carpio*).

Goldfish tend to inhabit lakes, ponds and slow flowing rivers and streams. They lay large numbers of small eggs among aquatic plants. Neither the eggs nor larvae are cared for by a parent. Goldfish are omnivores so will feed on a variety of items, ranging from aquatic plants to small insects.

Wild goldfish look different than the selectively bred aquarium goldfish you would find in a store but are still the same species. Wild goldfish are generally an olive to bronze colour, but the hybrids can be golden or orange colours. An average sized goldfish found in the Waikato is 160 millimetres. In the early 1900s goldfish in central North Island lakes were an important food source to Māori, who referred to them as morihana. For some iwi this species remains culturally significant.

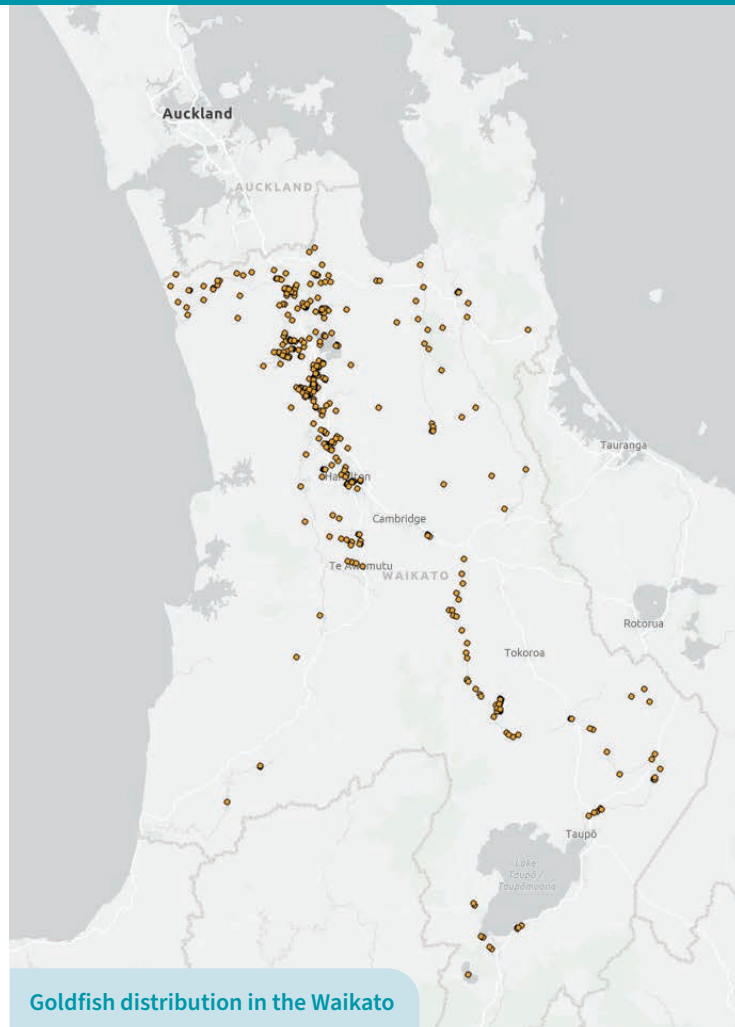


Photo: Mike Lake

