

Upland bully

Gobiomorphus breviceps

Native

At risk

Upland bully are widely distributed through the South Island, but the northern limit of this species extends to the Mōkau catchment in the Waikato region. Of the nine bully species in New Zealand, it is most often confused with the common and Cran's bully. This stocky bully has a blunt face and orange spots on its cheeks.

Unlike many other native fish that require access to the sea to complete their lifecycle, upland bully larvae are able to grow within the stream without being carried downstream to the sea. Therefore, this species is generally found far inland as no ocean migration is necessary.

Upland bullies are solitary and prefer boulder/cobble streams but can be found in weedy slow-flowing systems where they feed on a variety of stream insects. Females lay several hundred large (2 to 3 millimetre) eggs on the bottom of large rock, which are guarded by the males. Juveniles can sometimes be seen in small shoals at the stream edge in late summer.

Upland bully distribution in the Waikato (note the two records for the Coromandel region are likely misidentifications).



Upland bully distribution in the Waikato



Photo: Stella McQueen

He taiao mauriora ▲ Healthy environment

He hāpori hihiri ▲ Vibrant communities

He ōhanga pakari ▲ Strong economy

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