

# Shortjaw kōkopu

## *Galaxias postvectis*

Native

Threatened – Nationally vulnerable

The shortjaw kōkopu is one of the five galaxiid species in the whitebait run. Adults can be hard to distinguish from other whitebait species. An adult typically exhibits a large black blotch on the side behind its head (a feature often also seen in banded kōkopu) and, with a closed mouth, it has a lower jaw that tucks well behind the upper jaw. Adult fish also often exhibit orangey fins with dark lines between the fin rays (see photo below).

These fish are usually present in mid-elevation streams and inhabit undisturbed, bouldery rivers. Shortjaw kōkopu are solitary and nocturnal, feeding heavily on terrestrial invertebrates such as ants, spiders and cicadas that fall onto the surface of the water or aquatic invertebrates that live among rocks on the stream bed. Records indicate that adults commonly grow to between 150 and 120 millimetres long. Generally, the shortjaw kōkopu is a coastal species but can be found inland where the habitat is suitable.

