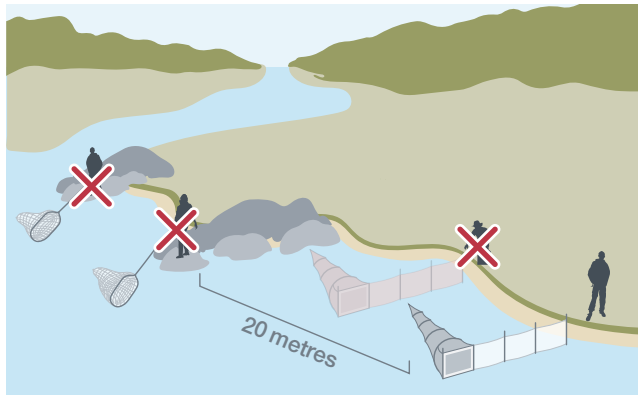


The whitebaiter's guide to whitebaiting

A summary of the
Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021

Other important rules

- > Whitebait fishing is only allowed where water levels are affected by the tide. Back pegs will mark this limit in some rivers.
- > No one can fish for whitebait within 20m of any tide gate, floodgate, confluence, culvert, weir or groyne, or fish from any bridge or vessel.



- > No one when whitebaiting can interfere with, alter or modify the natural bed or banks of any river, stream, estuary or channel.
- > No one can discard or dump on shore any fish taken when fishing for whitebait.

Definitions

- > **fishing gear** means anything that is used or is capable of being used for the purposes of fishing for whitebait (the part of the fishing gear in the water that actually catches the fish).
- > **fixed fishing gear** means any fishing gear that is set to fish for whitebait, except when used from a licensed structure (stand).
- > **licensed structure** means a structure authorised to be used for the purpose of fishing for whitebait under the Resource Management Act 1991. These are managed by regional councils.

Penalties

Penalties for not following these regulations may result in an infringement fine of \$400. You may also be prosecuted.

For more information

Please contact your local DOC office or email whitebait@doc.govt.nz

Check, Clean, Dry

Stop the spread of didymo and other freshwater pests.

Didymo is an exotic alga that invades waterways. To prevent the spread of freshwater pests such as didymo, always Check, Clean, Dry all footwear (including waders), vehicles, fishing equipment and other items before entering, and when moving between, waterways.

For more information and specific cleaning guidelines, visit: mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/finding-and-reporting-pests-and-diseases/pest-and-disease-search?article=1675

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BETWEEN WATERWAYS

Whitebait fishing regulations

This brochure is a guide to the Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021. It does not contain all the rules, which are on the New Zealand Legislation website – go to www.legislation.govt.nz and search for 'Whitebait Fishing Regulations 2021.' For more detailed information visit www.doc.govt.nz/whitebaiting.

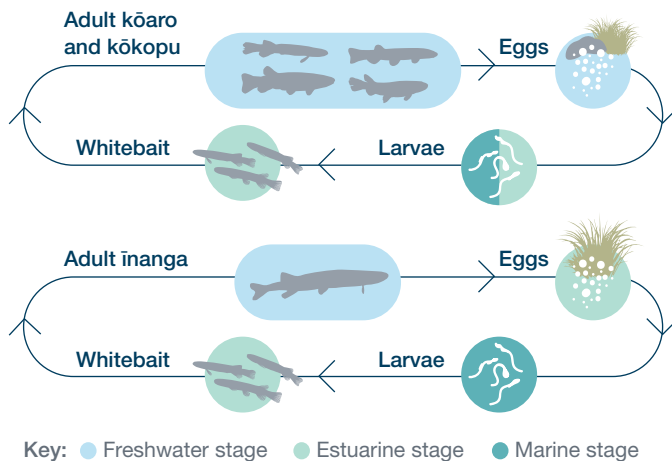
The new regulations will improve the fishery's sustainability by reducing fishing pressure on whitebait species and native fish bycatch. The regulations had not changed since the 1990s and were overdue for review.

Following these regulations is an important part of ensuring the future of whitebait species.

What are whitebait?

Whitebait are the juveniles of six freshwater fish (īnanga, banded kōkopu, giant kōkopu, shortjaw kōkopu, kōaro and common smelt) which return upstream each spring to find suitable adult habitat. Four of these species are threatened or at risk of extinction.

The life cycle of whitebait species



Fishing season

The whitebait season is open between 1 September and 30 October (inclusive) in all areas of Aotearoa except the Chatham Islands (1 December until the last day of February).

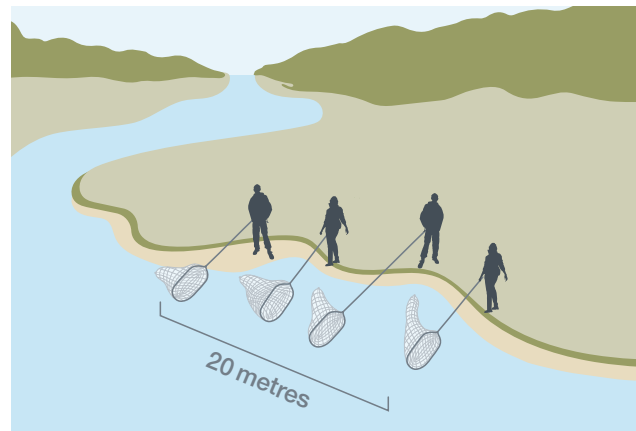
Whitebaiting is only allowed during the season and from:

- 5 am to 8 pm, or
- 6 am to 9 pm when New Zealand Daylight Saving is being observed.

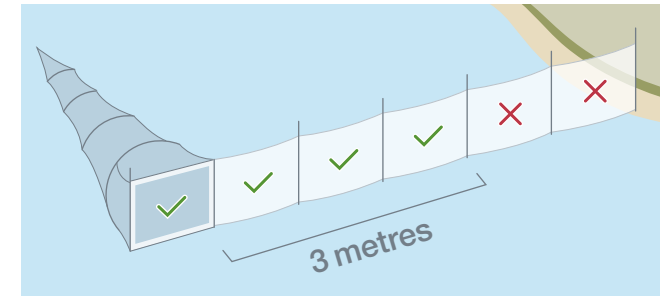
The taking of whitebait at all other times is prohibited.

Fishing gear

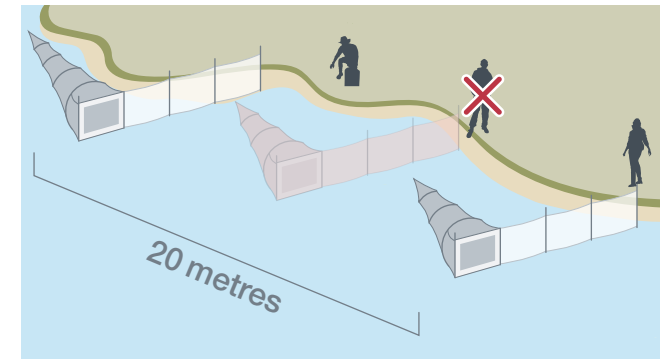
- > Fishing gear needs to be removed from the water daily.
- > Anyone setting or using a whitebait net must remain within 10 m of the net.
- > Whitebait nets must have a mouth no larger than 4.5 m (measured around the inside of the net frame) and framing material no wider than 120 mm. Drag nets must be no taller than 1 m in height and be flat when laid on a flat surface. Both whitebait nets and drag nets must be no more than 3.5 m in length. Drag nets still cannot be used on the West Coast.
- > There is no minimum distance between scoop or drag nets.



- > The maximum length of fishing gear from licenced structures (stands) cannot exceed 6 m. This provision does not take effect on the West Coast until 2023.
- > Screens are the only lawful device to divert whitebait into a net. They cannot total more than 3 m in length (not including the net), unless used from a licenced structure (stand).



- > A minimum distance of 20 m between fixed fishing gear must be maintained at all times, except when used from stands.



- > Fishing gear (from either side of the channel) cannot exceed more than one quarter of the width across the waterway.

