

Inanga

Galaxias maculatus ((Jenyns, 1842))



S.C. Moore

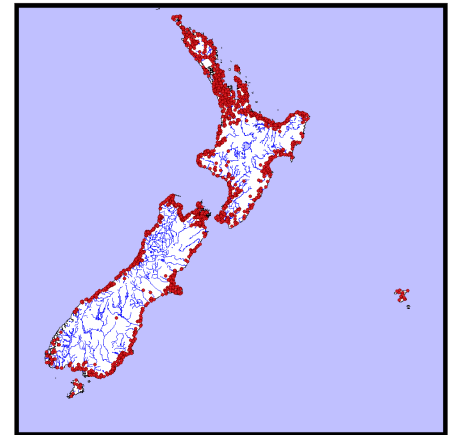
Every New Zealander knows what whitebait are, and most have probably eaten a fritter or two in their time. What many people don't realize is that five separate galaxiid species make up the whitebait catch - inanga, banded kokopu, koaro, shortjaw kokopu, and giant kokopu. In most river systems, the inanga makes up the majority of the whitebait catch, and thus this fish is probably encountered more often than other members of the Galaxiidae family.

Adult inanga are the smallest of the five whitebait species, rarely exceeding 110 mm in length. Their silvery belly and somewhat forked tail make them easy to distinguish from the other galaxiids except for their close relative the dwarf inanga, a species restricted to some dune lakes near Dargaville. Smelt frequent similar habitat to inanga and can be confused with them. However, smelt have scales and an adipose fin, features that are easy to see on close examination.

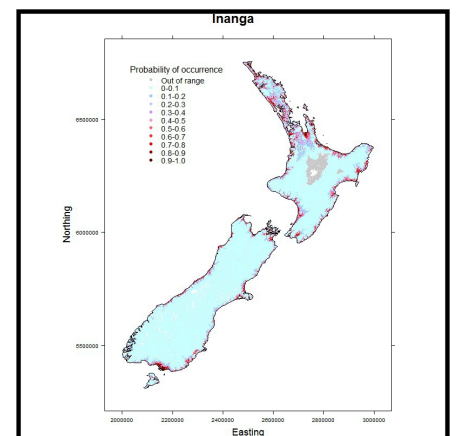
Inanga inhabit open rivers, streams, lakes, and swamps near the coast and can often be seen shoaling in open water. They are very poor climbers, however, and do not penetrate any distance inland unless the river gradient is very gradual. Inanga are one of the most widespread galaxiids. They occur right around New Zealand and its offshore islands, as well as in South America and Australia.

Over the years, much has been said about the decline of the whitebait fishery and possible reasons for it. Fishing pressure was the target of a recent study on the Mokau River, which used dye-stained whitebait to determine the number of fish

Known distribution



Predicted Distribution



Penetration

