

Something fishy...

Several species of introduced fish live in our Region's waterways, not all of them cause problems, but these ones do! They prey on native species and their eggs and play havoc with the quality of our water.

Some of the worst pest fish in our Region are:

Koi Carp

Appearance: Koi carp look like large goldfish with two pairs of barbells (feelers) at the base of the mouth. Their colour can vary a lot, and often they will have irregular blotching of black, red, gold, orange or pearly white.



Size: Can grow to half a metre long or more and weigh up to 5kg.

The damage: Koi carp feed by stirring up the bottom of ponds, lakes, and rivers muddying the water and destroying native plant and fish habitat. Koi carp are opportunistic feeders, eating insects, spawn, juvenile fish of other species and a diverse range of plants and organic matter. They feed like a vacuum cleaner, sucking up everything and blowing out what isn't wanted. Aquatic plants are dislodged in the process and unable to re-establish. They cause habitat loss for plants, native fish and waterfowl.

Gambusia (sometimes called mosquito fish)

Appearance: Gambusia are small fish with a greenish silvery sheen. They mature at six weeks old and are unusual because they give birth to live young. This means that only one pregnant female is needed to start a new population. This means Gambusia populations can build up to large numbers very quickly.



Size: Mature females grown to 6 cm and males to 3.5 cm.

The damage: Gambusia populations quickly expand to outnumber other species. They attack native fish, including larger species, and eat their eggs. Whitebait and mudfish species are especially vulnerable to Gambusia as they live in similar habitats.

Brown bull-headed catfish

Appearance: Catfish are dark brown with eight long whisker-like feelers around the mouth. They have sharp spines at the front of the pectoral and pelvic fin.

Size: Grow up to 30cm long and 2kg in weight.

The damage: They can survive in a wide range of temperatures and tolerate poor water quality. They are able to survive for long periods out of water and are difficult to kill. They stir up sediment and prey on small native fish, fish eggs and are known to eat and compete with koura (native freshwater crayfish).

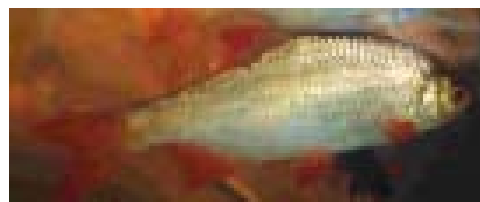


Rudd

Appearance: Rudd are a silvery colour with bright orange fins.

Size: Can grow up to 40cm long and weigh up to 2kg.

The damage: In some areas these fish are considered a sports fish but in our Region they are a pest. They feed voraciously on insects, aquatic plants and other fish, competing with other species for food and damaging native fish habitat.

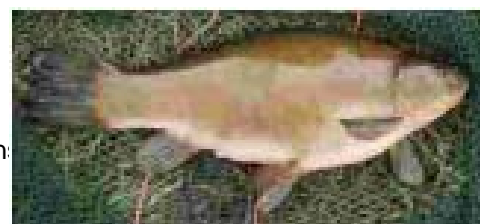


Tench

Appearance: Generally olive green, varying from light to dark. They have barbells at the corners of the mouth and tick, fleshy fins. Their most distinctive feature is their bright orange eyes.

Size: Can grow to 35cm long and weigh up to 4kg.

The damage: Tench prefers still or gently flowing waters with a muddy bottom and rich aquatic plant growth. In these conditions they are prolific breeders and in large numbers will attack native fish and eat their eggs.



You can help stop pest fish spreading

Rid your pond of pest fish...the safe way!

If you have identified pest fish in your pond the best way to get rid of them is temporarily draining it, then removing and destroying the fish. DO NOT empty pond water into the storm water system, instead drain it onto the grass.

Stock your pond with some environmentally friendly creatures: Native whitebait, Native bullies,

o **Fish can't walk...**

But they are spreading into places they haven't been recorded before by people moving them around accidentally and on purpose. It is illegal to distribute or transport pest fish so remember:

- Don't move fish around or release them into new waters.
- If you no longer want your aquarium pets, find them another home or see if your local pet shop can find one for you. Do not empty your aquarium contents into rivers, gutters, storm water drains, lakes or wetlands.
- Ensure your pond or waterway is isolated from natural ones (even in floods).
- Screen inlets and outlets of ponds on your property to prevent fish movement from the pond.
- Don't collect aquatic plants from the wild or from friends, as fish (and fish eggs) can catch a ride.
- Wash your boats and trailers down carefully after use to prevent pest fish from hitching a ride.
- If you know of people who are spreading these fish around please contact your local DOC office.

For more information freephone Horizons on 0508 800 800