

Brown bullhead catfish

Ameiurus nebulosus

Notify Council

Although this species is not currently known to be a problem in our region, we would like to know if you've come across it. Please report any sightings to Greater Wellington Regional Council in the first instance.

What does it look like?

Catfish are robust fish with distinctive whisker-like barbels (feelers). They have sharp spines at the front of the pectoral and pelvic fin. In New Zealand they often grow to 30 cm in length and 2 kg weight. 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 are widespread in the Waikato River system, but are also found in Northland and there are two isolated populations in the South Island.

Why is it a problem?

Catfish stir up sediment and prey on small native fish, fish eggs and are known to eat and compete with koura (native freshwater crayfish).



Control Methods

All catfish must be killed on capture and not returned to the water alive. Contact MPI if seen.

Related Links

Invasive Species Compendium <http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/94468>

Department of Conservation <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/animal-pests/fish/catfish/>

NZ Freshwater Weed and Pest Visual Guide <https://www.thisisus.nz/assets/Resources/New-Zealand-freshwater-weed-and-pest-visual-guide.pdf>

Freshwater Invasive Species of NZ 2020 https://niwa.co.nz/sites/default/files/Freshwater%20invasive%20species%20of%20New%20Zealand%202020_1.pdf

Check Clean Dry <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/exotic-pests-and-diseases-in-new-zealand/active-biosecurity-responses-to-pests-and-diseases/exotic-freshwater-clams-corbicula/stop-clams-from-spreading/>