

# Common smelt

## *Retropinna retropinna*

Native

Not threatened

Smelt are one of the most widespread fish in the main stem of the Waikato River. This species can rear in both the ocean and in freshwater lakes, making poor river connectivity less of an issue for recruitment. Because of their abundance and distribution, it is thought that smelt have a considerable role in ecosystem functioning.

Smelt are an important part of the Waikato and Waihou Rivers whitebait fishery, however, they are known as second class whitebait and a lot less appealing than the regular Galaxias whitebait. Common smelt can be distinguished from other whitebait easily because they smell like cucumber and have a small adipose fin behind the dorsal fin. They are also an important source of food for trout in the central North Island.

