

# Gambusia

## *Gambusia affinis*

Introduced

Unwanted organism

Photo: Callum Bourke

An exotic fish from South America introduced into New Zealand in the 1930's, gambusia were used as an experimental control for mosquitoes. Instead, they actively compete and impact on native fish and invertebrate species.

This small fish (males up to 35mm, females 60mm) can be seen in shoals in drains and wetland margins in summer. Gambusia can produce up to 130 live young every 4-5 weeks giving them the ability to overwhelm ecosystems, particularly after significant natural disasters. This is compounded by their extreme tolerance of poor water conditions (including pollutants and pesticides), preferring slow flowing warm water.

Possessing and/or releasing gambusia is an offence under the Biosecurity Act which can result in hefty fines.

