

Upland bully

Gobiomorphus breviceps

Native

Not threatened

Photo: Waikato Regional Council

Widely distributed through the South Island, but the northern limit of this species extends to the Mokau catchment. Of the seven bully species in NZ it is most often confused with the common and cran's bully. This stocky bully has a blunt face and orange spots on its cheeks.

Unlike many other native fish which require access to the sea to complete their lifecycle. Upland bully larvae are able to grow within the stream without being carried downstream to the sea. Therefore, this species is generally found far inland as no ocean migration is necessary.

Upland bullies are solitary and prefer boulder / cobble streams but can be found in weedy slow flowing systems where they feed on a variety of stream insects. Females lay several hundred large (2-3mm) eggs on the bottom of large rock which are guarded by the males. Juveniles can sometimes be seen in small shoals at the stream edge in late summer. In the both the 2012/2013 and 2015/2016 Waikato surveys we encountered Upland bullies at two sites in the Mokau catchment only. While in the 2016/2017 Waikato survey they were found at one site, also in the Mokau catchment.

