



# Streams Alive News

May 2011

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Streams Alive newsletter. In this issue: Fish-friendly floodgates, planting update for the coming winter, resource consents, Landcare Trust publications, and some information on our five whitebait species.

## Planting Update

I'm currently in the process of finalising the planting plans for the Streams Alive properties for the coming months. Planting will commence on the Kapiti Coast properties in June and on the Wellington, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa sites in July and August. If you haven't heard from me or have any specific questions about your property don't hesitate to give me a call or drop me an email. *Cheers, Anna*



**Did you know ...** cats are responsible for more bird species extinctions worldwide than any other cause apart from habitat destruction!

To help the birds (and lizards) living in your garden try keeping your cat well fed, attach a bell to its collar and if possible keep it inside.



## “Fish-Friendly” Floodgates in Otaki!

At the start of April a new fish-friendly attachment was fitted to one of the floodgates near the Otaki River mouth. The attachment works by slowing the closing time of the gates as the tide comes in and aims to allow more whitebait to swim through the floodgate and up into the Rangiuru Stream.

Many of New Zealand's approximately 35 species of unique freshwater fish are found nowhere else in the world and about half of them must migrate between the sea and freshwater to breed successfully. Barriers such as floodgates, culverts, dams and weirs can block this migration and can have an impact on future fish populations.

Other threats to our native fish include loss of habitat through wetland drainage and vegetation clearance, over fishing, pollution, stock damage and predation and competition from introduced fish species.



Fitting the fish-friendly attachment to the floodgate at the start of April.

## What are whitebait ... ?

What we refer to as whitebait are in fact the juveniles of five different species of native fish (*inanga*, *koaro*, *banded kokopu*, *giant kokopu* and *shortjaw kokopu*).



Adult inanga caught near the Rangiuuru floodgates.

**Inanga** make up about 95% of the total whitebait catch and usually live for just a year (6 months at sea and 6 months in freshwater). The adults grow to about 10cm in length and have a distinctive silver belly and forked tail.

The **koaro** can live for more than six years and grow to 25cm long. Their sides and back are covered in a pattern of golden blotches and bands. Koaro travel further upstream than other whitebait and can climb up wet vertical surfaces.

The **banded kokopu** can grow to 25cm and can be identified by the thin, pale, vertical bands along its sides. Banded kokopu need clean bush lined streams and will avoid those with lots of sediment or pollution.

Sometimes known as the native trout the **giant kokopu** can grow up to 40cm long. Their numbers are declining and they are considered “threatened” throughout New Zealand. They like slow-flowing water and don’t usually migrate very far inland. They’re not very good climbers so barriers like weirs can prevent them moving upstream.

The **shortjaw kokopu** is a nationally threatened species. It is distinctive because its lower jaw is shorter than the upper one. It also has a dark patch behind its gill openings.

For more information on native fish in the Wellington Region see the GW publication “Can fish fly? Native freshwater fish of our region”.

## Resource Consents and Structures in Streams

Because structures in streams can have a huge impact on our native fish and other aquatic life it’s important to find out a bit more information before progressing with any operations that might have an impact on the stream.

Resource Consents are designed to protect our natural environment from intentional and unintentional damage. Below is some useful information from our Consents Team:

*“Resource consents are required for people who wish to use or develop the natural resources of air, water, coast and land in our region. The Regional Freshwater Plan for the Wellington Region contains the rules and policies Greater Wellington uses to manage the freshwater environment in our region. If you are planning to undertake work that may affect a watercourse, including repairing erosion and scour and making improvements to your property, or installing/replacing a culvert, bridge or ford crossing, you may need to obtain a resource consent.*

*Greater Wellington offers one hour of free pre-application advice. If you think you may require a resource consent you can contact the Environment Helpdesk on 04 830 4255 for any consent related advice”.*



Inanga spawning site in Oterei Stream in the Wairarapa. Inanga eggs were found in the vegetation along the white line marked in the picture. Eggs are laid during high spring tides in summer or autumn, eggs take between 10 days and a month to develop and need to be immersed in water again before they hatch.

## Landcare Trust Website and Publications – worth a look!

The Landcare Trust promotes “sustainable land management through community involvement”. If you’re interested in a free copy of “Landcare – a practical guide” or some of their fantastic native fish information sheets have a look at <http://www.landcare.org.nz/>

For more information, contact Greater Wellington:

Anna Burrows  
Biodiversity Restoration Advisor (Riparian)  
04 830 4423  
027 6120 790  
Anna.Burrows@gw.govt.nz

GW/BIO-G-11/78

[www.gw.govt.nz](http://www.gw.govt.nz)  
[info@gw.govt.nz](mailto:info@gw.govt.nz)