

## Koaro (*Galaxias brevipinnis*) in the Te Arawa lakes

The Te Arawa lakes are an integral part of the Te Arawa people. Traditionally, these lakes provided a bountiful array of mahinga kai (food). Koaro (a freshwater fish) were an important component of the harvest. Koaro generally live as adults in streams, where they spawn. Typically, larval development occurs at sea, and juveniles migrate from the sea into rivers during spring. However, koaro are readily able to survive and reproduce in lakes, with the lake acting as an inland sea where larvae develop. Koaro numbers have declined considerably, with few Te Arawa lakes now supporting significant populations. Predators, availability of food, and water and habitat quality are all factors that influence the distribution and abundance of koaro in the Te Arawa lakes. At least some of these factors can be managed through catchment and/or in-lake management that maintains good water quality.

