

# Quick guide to sorting whitebait samples

by Jody Richardson and Bob McDowall

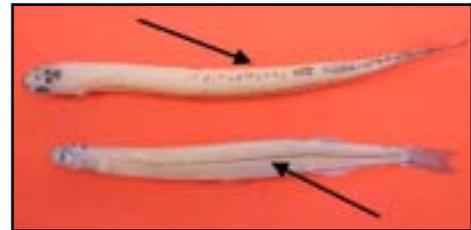
Whitebait samples for identification should be preserved for 5–7 days in formalin, and then transferred to 70% ethyl alcohol for long-term storage. **Do not freeze** the samples.

## Step 1.

Empty the sample into a tray and remove any whitebait starting to get colouration and visible guts or other fish species (use the family quick guide if necessary).

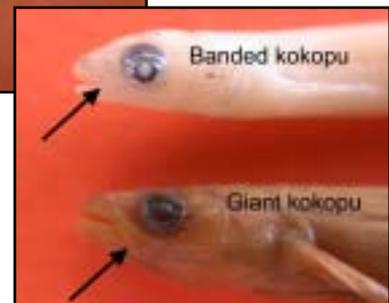
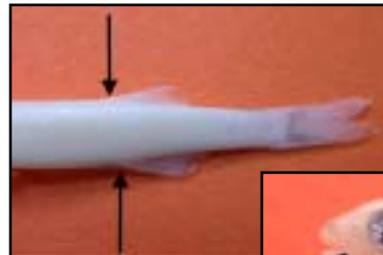
## Step 2.

Remove the inanga (*Galaxias maculatus*). These are largish whitebait with pigmented spots along the lateral line and on the back in front of the dorsal fin. They have tiny mouths with black pigmentation.



## Step 3.

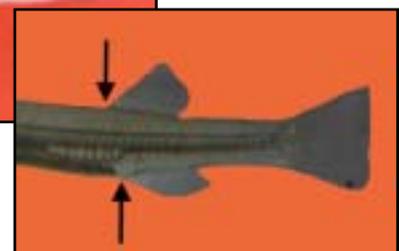
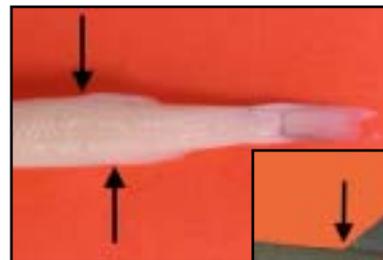
Remove the banded kokopu (*G. fasciatus*). These are small whitebait with the origin of the dorsal fin directly above the origin of the anal fin. Giant kokopu (*G. argenteus*) have a similar fin arrangement, but also have very large mouths. Giant kokopu are most likely to occur in samples collected late in the season (at the end of November).



## Step 4.

The remaining whitebait are either koaro (*G. brevipinnis*) or shortjaw kokopu (*G. postvectis*).

- Koaro are the most common species and have the origin of the dorsal fin distinctly in front of the anal fin origin. Generally, they are large whitebait.
- Shortjaw kokopu have the dorsal/anal origins slightly offset. They are almost impossible to distinguish from koaro.



**End**