

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).

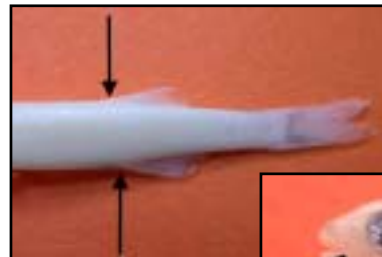
Step 2.

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.

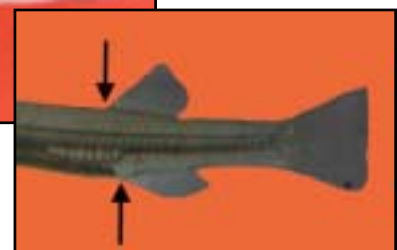
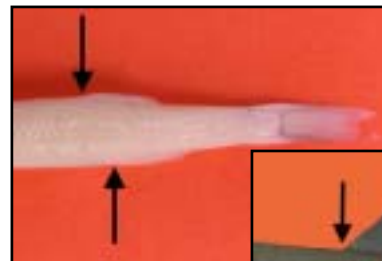
Remove the banded kokopu (*G. fasciatus*). These are small whitebait with the origin of the dorsal fin directly above the origin of the anal fin. Giant kokopu (*G. argenteus*) have a similar fin arrangement, but also have very large mouths. Giant kokopu are most likely to occur in samples collected late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