

# OTAGO GALAXIIDS

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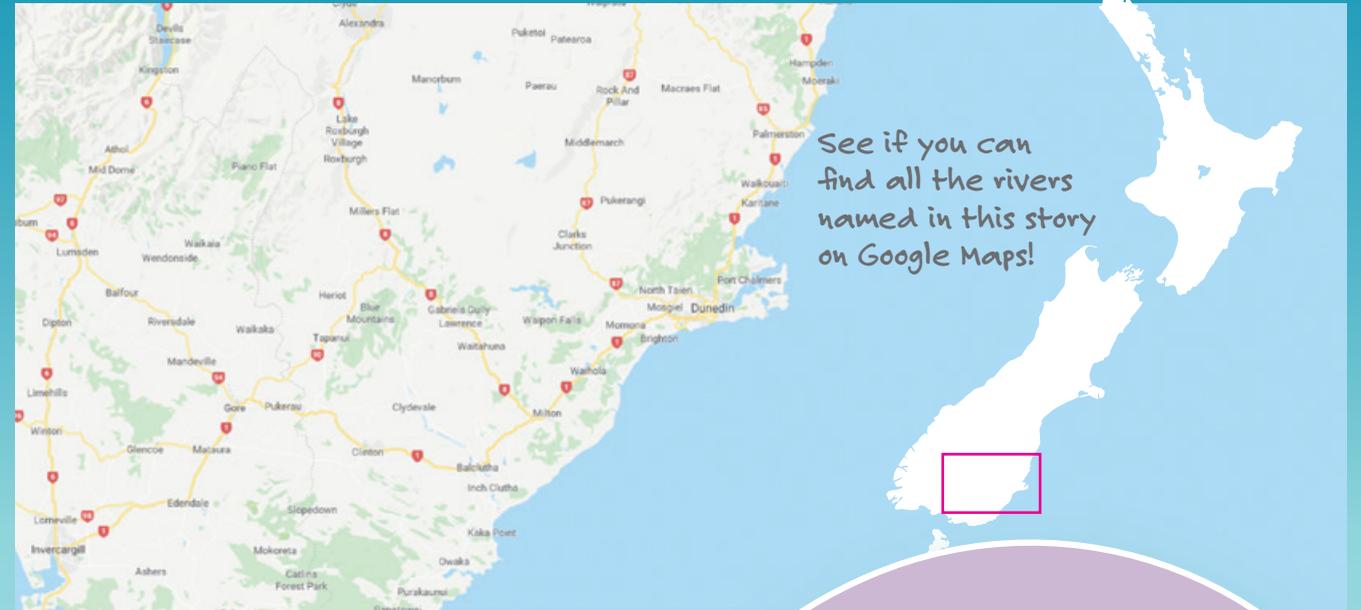
The *Galaxiidae* family of fish was named for the beautiful gold specks in their scaleless skin. Together, these specks look like a galaxy of stars.

Whitebait are our migratory (travelling) galaxiids. They go between fresh and sea water to breed and feed. But there are also dozens of other non-migratory (non-travelling) galaxiids in New Zealand that stay in fresh water their whole lives.

As they've been isolated by geological events, such as earthquakes and glaciers moving, each galaxiid species is unique and special.

Otago is a non-migratory galaxiid hotspot! Nearly half of these galaxiid species live there.

Meet some of my favourite sparkling fish that live in this region:



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## Central Otago roundhead

**NATIONALLY ENDANGERED**

- We live in the headwaters of the Taieri and Manuherikia rivers.
- Our brown markings are mismatched down our backs, with a gold or silver dusting.
- We can live up to four years.
- We like the shallow gravel of braided rivers.



## Southern flathead

**DECLINING**

- We're found in the Waiau, Aparima, Mataura, and Oreti rivers. Some of us are even found on Rakiura (Stewart Island). We're thought to have arrived there during an ice age when a land bridge was present.
- We are grey brown to olive green, with dark brown splotches and mismatched patterns down our backs.
- Our relatives are usually found high up in headwater streams away from predators. Not us! We're typically found in the mid to lower reaches of gravel-bottomed streams and rivers.

## Clutha flathead

**NATIONALLY CRITICAL**

- We live in the upper tributaries (river branches) of the Clutha River, upstream of Roxburgh.
- We're golden brown, with darker splotches and orange dusting.
- We have broad flattened head with thick lips.
- We can live up to 10 years.



## Eldon's galaxias

**NATIONALLY ENDANGERED**

- We live in East Otago in the small tributaries of the Taieri, Waipori, and Tokomairiro rivers.
- We're dark grey-brown, with creamy gold bars along our bodies.
- We can live up to 12 years.
- We lay tiny eggs in streamside vegetation or small caves carved out of stream banks during floods.



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