

Discover Bark Bay in the dark

Bark Bay at night is one of the best places in the Abel Tasman to see native freshwater fish.

The reason there are so many native fish in the park is due to there being expansive vegetation in the catchments surrounding the streams and the good water quality. Most streams of the Abel Tasman are free of introduced trout or salmon. The large number and size of the freshwater fish found here is yet another reason why the park is so special.

Follow the trail on the west side of the hut for 10 minutes to get to Huffam stream. Just over the bridge you will find a series of small crystal clear limestone streams teeming with native fish.

New Zealand has over 50 native freshwater fish species and many are listed as threatened. Like many New Zealand natives, they are nocturnal and most active at night. To spot them, you will need to bring along a strong torch to shine in the water, and keep quiet.



Photo Philip Simpson



Migratory Galaxiids

Giant kōkopu, shortjaw kōkopu, banded kōkopu, kōaro and inanga are collectively known as migratory galaxiids. They get their name from the dazzling spots found on the fish which are reminiscent of star Galaxies in the night sky. It is the juveniles of these five species that make up whitebait.

New Zealand native fish are secretive and nocturnal. Half of our fish species spend some part of their lives at sea, which means they need easy passage to get to and from their freshwater habitats. When given the chance adult native fish range in size from the speckled giant kokopu which can grow to 450mm long, to the silver-bellied inanga which grows to 100mm long.

Don't forget, look up to the sky for the galaxies and down in the streams for the Galaxiids.



Giant kōkopu photo DOC Sjaan Bowie



Kōaro photo DOC Nadine Bott



Banded kōkopu photo DOC Anita Spencer