

Tench

Tinca tinca

What does it look like?

Tench were first introduced to New Zealand in 1867 as a sports fish. They grow to a large size in New Zealand, around 2kg. They are usually olive green-bronze in colour, with red eyes, two barbels, large soft-rayed fins and copious mucous. Adults are approximately 30-40cm long (sometimes up to 70cm) and the lifespan is around five years. Male and female fish look slightly different.

Juveniles predominantly feed on zooplankton. Adults are primarily bottom feeders, preferring small molluscs when available, but can survive solely on zooplankton when alternative food sources are absent. Tench are predominantly nocturnal foragers and are a warm-water species, becoming less active during winter.

Tench prefer shallow regions of warm, still or slow moving freshwater bodies with soft substrates of mud, silt, sand and preferably some submerged vegetation. They tolerate very low oxygen levels, high turbidity, brackish water and a wide pH range.

Why is it a problem?

Tench feed on insect larvae, crustaceans and molluscs. They have the potential to significantly alter native freshwater communities and have few predators in New Zealand. Tench may compete with common bullies as both are bottom dwelling, but no substantiating evidence of any effects is available.

Tench spawn in shallow water, broadcasting eggs over substrate. Multiple spawning events (batches) can occur within one season. Warmer temperatures favour earlier sexual maturation and higher fecundity.

Control Methods

We do not control tench, but you are welcome to contact us to discuss your situation.

Related Links

Invasive Fish Management Handbook <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/threats-and-impacts/animal-pests/nz-invasive-fish-management-handbook.pdf>

Freshwater Invasive Species of NZ 2020 https://niwa.co.nz/sites/niwa.co.nz/files/Freshwater%20invasive%20species%20of%20New%20Zealand%202020_0.pdf

Keeping up with the kākahi <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/ourchangingworld/558532/our-changing-world-keeping-up-with-the-kakahi>

