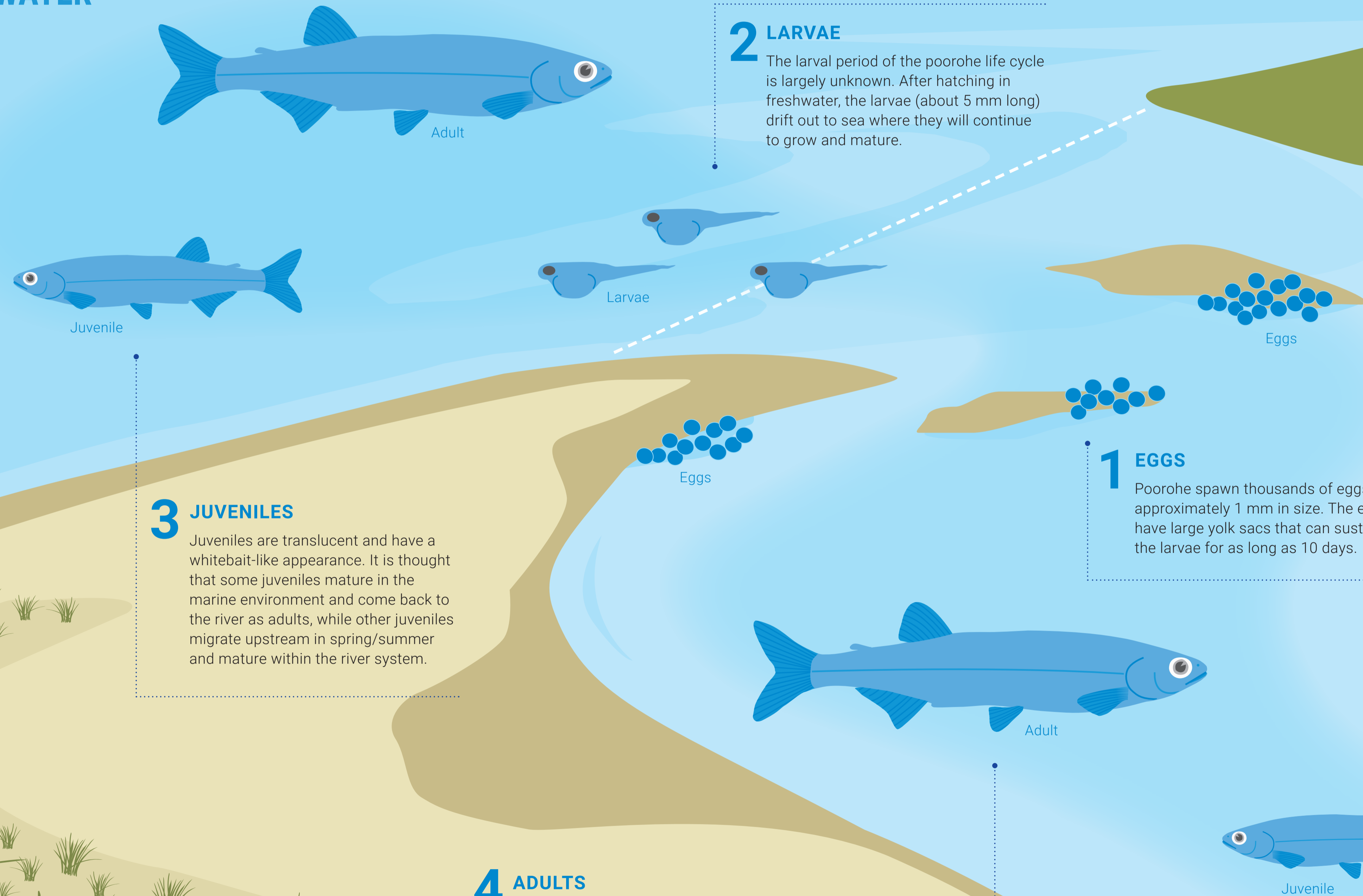


# POOROHE LIFE CYCLE

Poorohe (common smelt) is important to the Te Puuaha community in the lower Waikato River where they are also known as 'number two whitebait'. This species has scales, a distinctly forked tail, and is well known for their cucumber-like smell. In Aotearoa-New Zealand smelt can have either a diadromous (riverine/sea-going) or non-diadromous (associated with lakes) life cycle. Only common smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*) are found in the Waikato River. Very little is known about the life cycle needs of poorohe in the lower Waikato River.

## SALTWATER



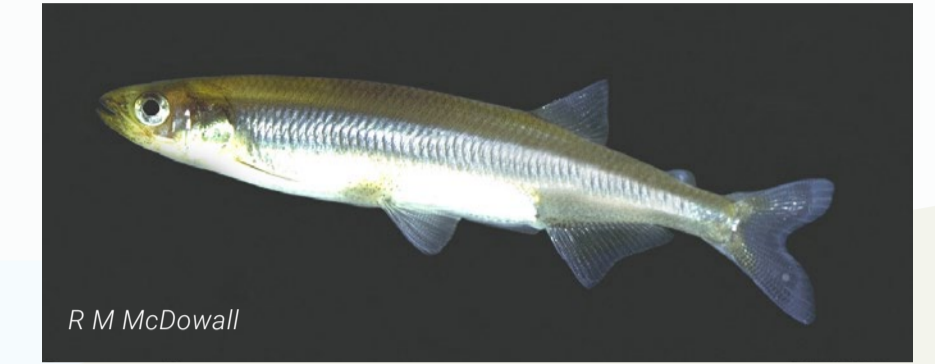
**2 LARVAE**  
The larval period of the poorohe life cycle is largely unknown. After hatching in freshwater, the larvae (about 5 mm long) drift out to sea where they will continue to grow and mature.

**3 JUVENILES**  
Juveniles are translucent and have a whitebait-like appearance. It is thought that some juveniles mature in the marine environment and come back to the river as adults, while other juveniles migrate upstream in spring/summer and mature within the river system.

**4 ADULTS**  
After spending time at sea or within the river system, adults move to the lower river to breed. Mature poorohe range between 90–100 mm in length and are approximately a year old. During late autumn and early winter, mature adults will spawn along sandbanks and sandy shoals in the lower Waikato River. It is thought that after spawning, the spent poorohe die; however, some may survive spawning and spawn again the following year.

**BRACKISH/  
FRESH WATER**

## TWO SPECIES OF SMELT ARE FOUND IN AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND



The common smelt (*Retropinna retropinna*)



Stokell's smelt (*Stokellia anisodon*)



The common smelt is widespread throughout Aotearoa-New Zealand including Rakiura and Rekohu/Wharekauri.



For more information visit [niwa.co.nz/te-kuwaha/Poorohe](http://niwa.co.nz/te-kuwaha/Poorohe)



We recognise that whaanau and hapuu across Aotearoa have an extensive range of names for their freshwater taonga species. In this resource the dialect used is from Waikato, but please check with your local hapuu for the te reo that is relevant to your area.