

Three of four NZ fish 'staring extinction in the face'

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Decline rates among the New Zealand longfin eel were highest in areas dominated by pasture.

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New Zealand's freshwater fish species are in peril - and especially in our pastoral countryside, researchers say.

In [a study published today](#), Victoria University's Dr Mike Joy and colleagues compared land use changes and more than 20,000 freshwater fish records since 1970.

The data, which covered fish distribution and abundance trends, along with a key measure of water pollution called the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI), showed more than three quarters of 25 analysed species were in decline.

About the same rate of decline was found in 20 native fish species - and in two thirds of cases, the drop was a significant one.

Further, the study found more species were in decline around land dominated by

pasture compared with areas covered with natural vegetation - a trend also shown among the IBI data.