



## Tēnā koutou katoa

Phew, what a busy term it has been! I've been working with schools all around Taranaki doing lots of different environmental monitoring and restoration work. This edition of SITE focuses on activities from this past term which have involved using innovative technologies and teaming up with the Department of Conservation and Waitara Alive for work with Waitara High School, and Drone Technologies NZ out at Ngamatapouri School. I hope you enjoy reading about the fabulous stuff Taranaki schools have been up to as much as I have enjoyed working with them.

Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards are happening earlier than usual this year. Nominations will open on 17th June and close on 19th July. These awards are made in five categories including Environmental Action in Education. For more details see [trc.govt.nz/award-categories-and-criteria](http://trc.govt.nz/award-categories-and-criteria).

More than ever before, requests from schools have exceeded time available, so apologies to those of you who I couldn't fit in. Remember to book early to avoid disappointment. Email [education@trc.govt.nz](mailto:education@trc.govt.nz).

Nāku noa nā,  
**Dr Emily Roberts**

## First term adventures and learning

This SITE newsletter showcases different types of environmental work that we've been doing with schools, featuring lots of examples from this past term. From mountains to rivers to sea, students have been undertaking environmental monitoring, learning how to record and interpret data and carry out positive actions to better protect our environment.



*Fun times composting.  
Lachie and Noah, Matapu School.*

## Pukeiti and Hollard Gardens

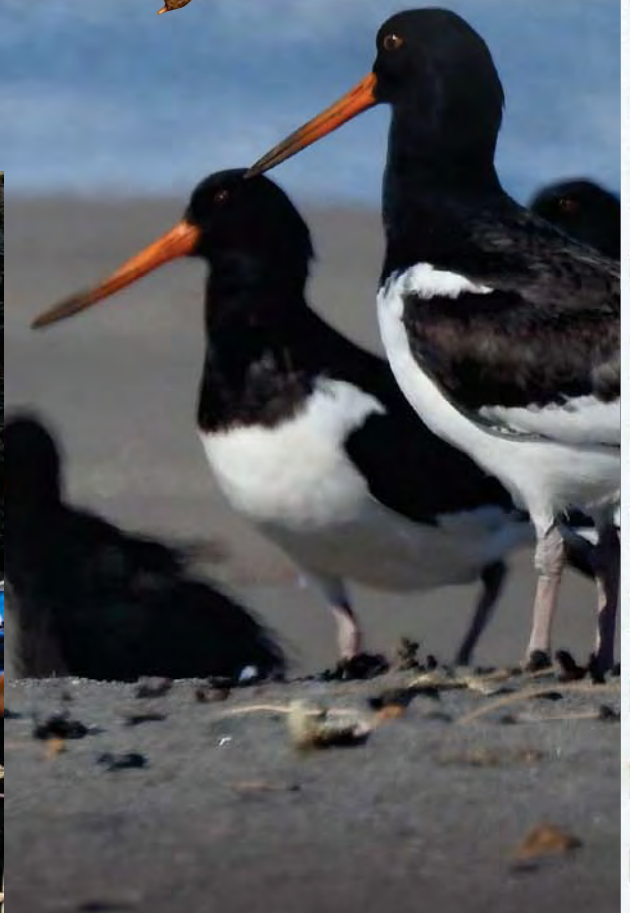
We've had some awesome adventures at Pukeiti Rainforest including exploring the old tram line with Oākura School and investigating whio (blue duck) food in fast-flowing rainforest streams with Sacred Heart Girls College.

Students from Matapu School learnt all about identifying birds and bugs, and making compost and worm farms at Hollard Gardens. Big thanks to the garden staff for all of their help and support.



# COAST

Students from Sacred Heart Girls College conducted a CoastBlitz at Arakaitai Reef, New Plymouth. They identified 57 species of animals and seaweed (<https://inaturalist.nz/projects/coastblitz-arakaitai-reef>) and quantified them using quadrats.



For Seaweek, we joined schools at two coastal Key Native Ecosystems. At Sandy Bay, Kelsi Bayly (TRC Environment Officer) and I caught up with students from Auroa School to collect spinifex seeds, check predator traps and identify threatened shorebirds. I also joined Mimi School during their school camp at Mimi Estuary, showing students how to identify predator and shorebird footprints in the sand. The students also made a tūturiwhatu (New Zealand dotterel) nest, providing a clear demonstration of how vulnerable shorebird chicks and eggs are during breeding season.

# FRESH WATER

We joined forces with students from Waitara High School and staff from the Department of Conservation and Waitara Alive to investigate how riparian planting is affecting the distribution of native and introduced pest fish in the Mangahinau Stream. The students found a clear link, with native inanga and common bully found in shaded, planted areas of the stream and pest fish gambusia found in unplanted paddocks. Students will be presenting their findings at a Whānau Science Fair evening at the school this term.



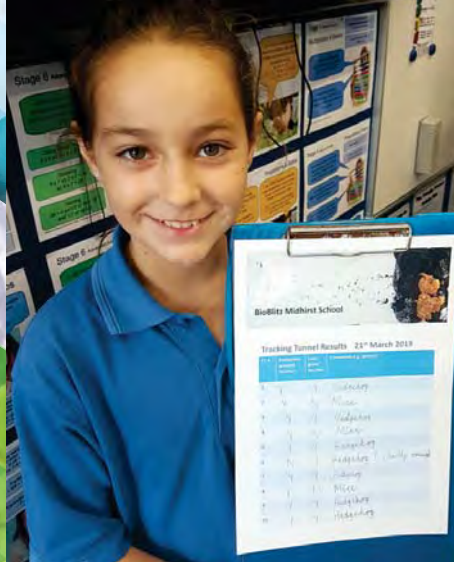
PHOTO: Waitara Alive



PHOTO: Drone Technologies NZ

As part of a Curious Minds-funded Participatory Science Project, students from Ngamatapouri School have been investigating how water clarity and colour of the Waitotara River changes with rainfall. Working with Taranaki-based company Drone Technologies NZ the students have been learning how to legally and safely operate drones to take images of the river at set monitoring points. They are combining this data with water clarity measurements and stream flow to better understand how sediment affects water quality.





## Towards Predator-Free Taranaki

We've been working with a number of schools this term on the Towards Predator-Free Taranaki programme, monitoring biodiversity values in addition to trapping introduced predators. Omata School, Midhirst School and Woodleigh School all under-

took a BioBlitz in areas of bush local to the schools and students now have a much better understanding of what native plant and animal species need protecting and what pest plant and animal species need removing. We are looking forward to working with these schools next term with restoration-based follow up actions.

## 'BioBlitz'

The BioBlitz network, undertaken by schools all around Taranaki has been growing, providing an incredible record of species around the region (1,732 observations including 462 different species). Check out all of the projects here: <https://inaturalist.nz/projects/towards-predator-free-taranaki-bioblitz-network>

Students from Uruti School used predator monitoring results together with trapping knowhow to work out where to place traps around their school grounds. It might be a small school, but many of the students are already experts in predator control, helping check a local trap line which protects the North Island brown kiwi in the area. It is incredibly encouraging to see so many schools across the region actively getting involved in action-based projects and we are looking forward to seeing the positive outcomes for our environment.



## Environmental awards

Many schools and students in Taranaki are actively involved in protecting the environment.

**Nominations for the Taranaki Regional Council Environmental Awards open on 17 June and close on 19 July.**

To nominate your school, class, project or students go to [trc.govt.nz/award-categories-and-criteria](http://trc.govt.nz/award-categories-and-criteria)

**For assistance or information on environmental education contact:**

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