

OUT OF site Frankley studies the Waiwhakaiho River

The middle syndicate at Frankley School has been busy learning all about the Waiwhakaiho River. The wide-ranging study included two field trips studying the river's water quality, firstly near the National Park and secondly at the Merrilands Domain in New Plymouth. Student, Thomas Fale is pictured closely examining one of the invertebrates he found at the first site.



Hawera Intermediate Environmental Award

Hawera Intermediate was presented with a Council Environmental award at a recent school assembly. Pictured are students from the school's 'enviro group' getting ready for one of its many planting sessions at Nowells Lakes, near Hawera. The school's propagation programme produces thousands of seedlings each year, for later planting at this site and in conjunction with this has developed herb patches, mini worm farms and its own vegetable gardens.



Teachers

Your students could win \$1000 for your school with the Weedbusters 2-minute Film Challenge for Year 1-8 students. Get creative, learn heaps, and help save the environment! More information at www.weedbusters.org.nz



Welbourn Environmental Award

Welbourn School was presented with a Council Environmental Award at a recent school assembly. The school has been a partner in a Forest and Bird project on the Te Henui Walkway, has a well established waste minimisation system in operation, promotes walking school buses and grows its own vegetables for sale. Pictured with Councillor Tom Cloke (second from left at the rear) are Mrs Carolyn Brough (Forest and Bird), teacher Kelly Collins, Council Education Officer Kevin Archer and senior pupils Kaylee and Robson.

Ratapiko visits the Council



We recently hosted an enthusiastic group of students, parents and teachers from Ratapiko School. The biolaboratory visit followed field trips to Lake Ratapiko and to a stream adjacent to the school.

Bits 'n' Pieces

Lifeline for longfins

Longfin eel (Tuna) numbers have been declining following years of excessive commercial exploitation and loss of habitat. A petition has been organized to call on the Ministry of Fisheries for a moratorium on commercial fishing of this endangered native species. Further information at www.longfineel.co.nz

Professional development

Biodiversity - Thursday 4 August
This session is sure to have value for your school's environmental education programme. You will learn about many biodiversity programmes happening in our region and get a chance to have some practical action as well. See the flyer in this newsletter for details.

Mini unit - Bus transport in our region

We are currently writing a mini-unit focused on bus transport in Taranaki. Many of the activities will be website based. The unit should be available on our website within the next few weeks.

Thank you letters

We really enjoy and value feedback from students; many thanks to both the writers and to their teachers. From time to time, I intend to publish sentences from some of the letters which I have especially appreciated for one reason or another. Here is the first set.

I learnt that we have 14 national parks in NZ, with Fiordland the largest at 1,257,000 ha, Tongariro is 75,000ha but good old Egmont is only 33,000ha. Stratford High School - Year 9.

You showed us the dangers of the mountain erupting and clearly explained that having a plan is a very important key to surviving. Stratford High School - Year 9.

I found heaps and heaps of snails, so many that when we went to empty the bugbox (that's where you put the aquatic invertebrates) they wouldn't come out. It was an awesome day! Ratapiko School - Year 4.

There is a lot about wetlands that I have learnt with you, I now know how special wetlands are and how much we need to care for them. Mangorei School - Junior student

Answers from page 3

Bird Quiz
1.C 2.C 3.B 4.B 5.D 6.A 7.B 8.A 9.A 10.D

Bird sayings match-up
1.E 2.H 3.J 4.D 5.G 6.I 7.A 8.B 9.F 10.C

Native and Introduced Birds
The native birds are Kiwi, Keruru, Tui, Fantail and Morepork whilst the introduced birds are Sparrow, Mynah, Starling, Thrush and Canadian goose.

For support with environmental education contact:

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SITE

Schools in the environment newsletter

Welcome

I am sure every one of us accepts that we live in a beautiful but volatile country. However, with the earthquakes in Christchurch, the tornadoes in Auckland, New Plymouth, Waikanae and Northland, landslides in the Bay of Plenty, as well as flooding in many places, it is very obvious that some natural events can be difficult to deal with. While we may never be able to stop them all from happening, we have a better chance of limiting the damage, preventing injury and indeed saving lives if we prepare ourselves for them. I know many schools are looking closely at how they will cope should something unexpected happen in school time which is a very sensible course of action.

You may be aware of the new safety arrangements we have in place when school groups visit us or whenever groups are involved in field trips with my support. Rather than sending letters to every school en masse, we have decided to send a letter to individual schools prior to any planned activity to advise them of our requirements. This system is working well; thank you for your co-operation.

The Council has just completed its annual recognition of the special environmental efforts made by individuals, professional or community groups, companies, local authorities and schools. Nine awards were made this year with three of them going to schools. Congratulations to the students, the staff and the school communities of Oakura, Welbourn and Hawera Intermediate for your fantastic work over many years. In most cases, nomination for a school award is made by me but it certainly doesn't have to be that way. We would welcome nominations from schools themselves or at least some contact bringing to our attention the possibility of a future nomination. You have plenty of time to think about this as nominations for next year's awards close on 31 March 2012.

While winter tends to be the time for classroom visits rather than teachers testing the weather with outdoor field trips, it has been great to be involved with many classes studying rivers, lakes, wetlands and rocky shore areas in recent months. As all teachers know, the secret behind a successful field trip often lies in the length of the study with a short, sharp and focused session being more productive than one which is dragged out.

Make the most of your term.
Kevin Archer



ROKARE

SCENIC RESERVE TRUST

This issue looks closely at what a visit to the Rotokare Scenic Reserve offers teachers and their classes. While there are similar exciting resources in other parts of New Zealand, it is a very special place and being a pest-free sanctuary, is at the top end of the nature conservation spectrum. Educator Melissa Jacobson is pictured with one of the kiwi chicks currently staying at the reserve.



Environmental Award - Oakura School

Oakura School was recently presented with a Taranaki Regional Council Environmental award. Councillor Craig Williamson presented the award to teacher Ray Priest and five of the school's environmental leaders. The school has been very involved with environmental programmes including growing plants in its nursery, its waste minimization programme, riparian planting, making boxes for blue penguins and studying local rivers and the coast. In addition the school has conducted a beach clean-up each year, for thirty-nine years.





ROKARE

SCENIC RESERVE TRUST

Facts and figures

Lake Rotokare Scenic Reserve

- Is situated 12 km east of Eltham.
- Consists of a 230ha forested hill-country catchment, with extensive wetlands and a 17.8ha natural lake.
- Is home to many native plant, tree, insect, bird and fish species.
- The Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust was formed in 2004 by a group of local people who were concerned that the Rotokare habitat was in decline.
- The construction of the pest-proof fence started in November 2006. The fence encircles the reserve and was built at a cost of almost two million dollars.

Rotokare newsletter

A very informative newsletter is issued to all schools in the first week of each term. If teachers would like their own personal copy they should contact Melissa.

Kiwi creche

Kiwi chicks stay at Rotokare until they reach 1.2kg, a size that allows them to fight off their number one predator - the stoat. Currently there are six kiwi chicks living at Rotokare and all are doing well.



Students from Sacred Heart Girls College pot native seedlings on a visit to the Rotokare Education Centre.



Education programmes

There are two options available; whatever programme you pick you can be assured that it will be unique to Taranaki and offer students an opportunity to experience what pre-human New Zealand may have been like.

OPTION 1

Rotokare Sanctuary Nature Trail Programme (Early Childhood - Year 10)

- This programme consists of nine unit options for classes. Suitable spots on the walkway are used for hands-on interactive learning.
- The broad units for primary and intermediate classes offer cross-curricular learning with activities based on the Living World (Science) strand, the Place and Environment (Social Science) strand and the Technology and Society (Technology) strand. Refer to the diagram of units available.
- Each unit is made up of a series of micro-activities, simulation games and assessment activities.

OPTION 2

Forest/Wetland Health Programme (Years 11 - 13)

- This programme is designed to introduce more complex ecological themes and makes use of Rotokare's distinctive features for the practical components of the biological sciences curriculum.
- The programme caters specifically for achievement standards in NCEA levels 1-3. The guided walk would be an excellent activity for classes camping in the area.

Duration and pricing options

There are many options available, from those lasting one hour up to a full day. In addition there is a guided night-time excursion of up to two hours. Prices reflect the length of the programme.

Contact details: Melissa Jacobson
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Phone: (06) 764 8500
Address: P.O. Box 33, Eltham
Website: www.rotokare.org.nz



Chester Borrows helps to release kiwi (Photo: T Green)

Become a volunteer

The Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust is always on the lookout for volunteers. Every Sunday is a working bee for those who can make it. If you or a student in your class is keen, please give Melissa a call, she would be delighted to hear from you. Already this year she has enlisted new volunteers from classes (both students and teachers) that have visited the sanctuary for the first time.



The planting team at O'Connors Gully.

Junior Environmentalists Page



Photo match up

Pictured are five native birds and five birds which have been introduced to New Zealand from other parts of the world. Can you name the five native birds as well as the five which have been introduced.



Class debate

Topic - Spending all that money on saving the life of 'Happy Feet' was money well spent.

You probably have heard about 'Happy Feet' the penguin that was found on a beach near Wellington recently. You could use this event as a topic for a class debate.

Wetland quiz

- This is New Zealand's famous bird icon.
A. penguin B. pigeon C. kiwi D. falcon
- Which of these introduced birds is not generally regarded as a problem?
A. magpie B. mynah C. blackbird D. Canadian goose
- This is New Zealand's smallest native bird.
A. bellbird B. rifleman C. yellow eyed penguin D. black robin
- This is the only mainland bird which builds a roofed nest?
A. kiwi B. warbler C. tomtit D. taiko
- The tui is capable of making the following sounds,
A. a cough B. a laugh C. a sneeze D. all of them
- Birds migrate mainly.
A. to find food B. to escape from hot weather C. to get away from other birds D. to see how far they can fly
- Which of these ducks is not a native?
A. grey duck B. mallard C. blue duck D. paradise shelduck
- This bird is extinct?
A. moa B. sparrow C. kaka D. hummingbird
- This bird is something of a thief?
A. kea B. starling C. owl D. tui
- This bird is not a type of parrot?
A. kakapo B. kaka C. Parakeet D. Black Stilt



North Island Bellbird

Match up Match the 'bird sayings' with their meanings.

1. A bird in the hand	A. Make no runs at all
2. The bird has flown	B. A one-under-par golf score
3. Birds of a feather	C. Seen from above
4. Strictly for the birds	D. Something uninteresting
5. Kills two birds with one stone	E. Something certain
6. A little bird	F. A stupid person
7. To get a duck in cricket	G. Achieve two aims at once
8. A birdie	H. Someone or something has gone
9. A bird brain	I. An unnamed informant
10. A bird's eye view	J. People of similar character



Not very funny jokes ... Not very funny 'bird' jokes. In fact some of them aren't funny at all.

- Did the owl worry when it lost its voice?**
 Answer - No, it didn't give a hoot.
- What language do birds speak?**
 Answer - Pigeon English.
- What do you call a bunch of chickens playing hide and seek?**
 Answer - Fowl play.
- What happens when ducks fly upside down?**
 Answer - They quack-up.
- Why did the parrot wear a raincoat?**
 Answer - Because she wanted to have a new name - Polly Unsaturated.
- How does a bird with a broken wing manage to land safely?**
 Answer - It uses a sparrow-chute.
- Where do birds invest their money?**
 Answer - In the stork market.
- What is a duck's favourite TV show?**
 Answer - The feather forecast.
- Which birds steal soap from a bath?**
 Answer - Robber ducks.
- How do you get a parrot to talk properly?**
 Answer - You send it to a polytechnic.

