

# Enviroschools Northland



## Beach clean-up attracts thousands!

Northland Enviroschools and Coastcare Northland worked together in the annual search for volunteers to help clean-up our beaches as part of this year's NZAEE Seaweed.

Hundreds of schoolchildren helped swell the ranks of volunteers, making this year's event one of the biggest and most successful to date. More than 3000 people took part in 54 beach clean-ups around the region.

Armed with free clean-up kits containing a clean-up guide, gloves, sunscreen, rubbish bags, tide charts and posters, the volunteers worked hard to pick-up rubbish at beaches from Kaitiāia to Bream Bay and almost everywhere in between.

Some of the volunteers audited a bag of rubbish, revealing mini mountains of litter and debris including all manner of plastics, onion bags, foil wrappers, glass and

plastic bottles, the odd jandal and flipper, polystyrene and tangled fishing line.

"It's a great experience for our Enviroschools' students – they get satisfaction from doing good work to look after our beaches and at the same time get a better understanding of the marine environment," says Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinator Susan Karels.

## Seaweed photo competition winners are as follows:

### All winning GoPro cameras

#### SCENIC CATEGORY

Matihetihe School

*When you visit Mitimiti Beach – just leave your footprints*



#### GROUP CATEGORY

Northland Canoe Club

*Great expectations*



#### CLOSE UP CATEGORY

Whananaki School

*He rau ringa e oti ai – Many hands make light work*



#### RUBBISH AUDIT PRIZE DRAW

(portable gas BBQ)

Hikurangi School





## Apply now for ELF funding



*Cr Justin Blaikie and Horeke School 'apprentice beekeeper' Benny Yukich (10) get a buzz from the school's bees.*

The little school of Horeke is among 17 Northland schools that have been busy with environmental projects funded through last year's Northland Regional Council Environmental Leaders Fund (ELF).

With a \$1930 ELF grant, the school bought beehives and beekeeping gear and is now producing honey from the hives on the school grounds. The project is called 'Buzzing Out' and looking after the bees has become a focus for learning for the 17 pupils at the school.

Principal Janine Tuta'i is delighted with the difference the hives have made to the children. "It's integrated learning," she says. "While they are finding out about bees, they are also learning about nature, reading, writing and mathematics."

Other ELF projects around the region include native tree planting, building shade houses for plant propagation, establishing wetlands and learning about Māori medicinal plants.

Applications for funding from this year's fund are now being accepted and schools have until May 5 to apply for up to \$2000 from the \$20,000 fund. More information is available at [nrc.govt.nz/elf](http://nrc.govt.nz/elf)

## Rats and Mice

Following the success of *Project Possum* and *Project Mustelid*, the Enviroschools programme is setting its sights on showing people how to control pest rats and mice.

The first Project Rodent, held recently in Whangārei, targeted the two most common rats in New Zealand (Norway and ship rats) and the common house mouse, all of which were inadvertently introduced by early European visitors.

Students from Tauraroa Area School and Otamatea and Whangarei Girls' High Schools took part in the hands-on skills workshop. They explored rodent pest control, biology and environmental impacts and experimented with trap and bait station placement.

The new course offers the chance to earn NCEA Unit Standard credits. For more information about rodents and other pest animals and weeds, visit [www.nrc.govt.nz/pestcontrolhub](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/pestcontrolhub)



*Kaitiaki area officer Mike Knight teaches the skill of trapping on the first Project Rodent Enviroschools course.*

## Kia ora koutou

Haere mai nau mai to May 2017's Enviroschools newsletter

Welcome! to eight new Enviroschools – Hora Hora, Kaingaroa, Matakoho, Ngataki, Omanaia, Tinopai, Waiotira and Whangarei Girls' High School

Congratulations! to the Bay of Islands International Academy (Silver) and Onerahi School (Green-Gold) which have both deepened their Enviroschools practice

Tau ke! to Jacque Knight, our secondary Enviroschools facilitator, and Reconnecting Northland for securing over 6000 native riparian plants for 17 Enviroschools to plant out this winter as part of their WaiPlanting mahi

Tau ke ano! to Jacque for working with the Tree Crops Association which has offered to set up orchards and gardens in Whangārei Enviroschools. Contact your Enviroschools facilitator if your school would like assistance in orchard and garden layout, pruning, grafting, permaculture methods and planting fruit trees

We look forward to seeing you at the Enviroschools events listed on the back page of this newsletter.

He waka eke noa – We are all in this together.



Nga mihi nui  
**Susan Karels**  
Enviroschools  
Regional  
Co-ordinator

## Newsflash!

Toimata Foundation will conduct a Nationwide Census in Term 4. Lead teachers in each Enviroschool or kindergarten will be sent a questionnaire to find out the range and number of people participating, the range of projects and practices undertaken this year, and how they have influenced sustainability outcomes. Enviroschools facilitators will be available to work with schools and kindergartens on this project. The goal is to amass a rich pool of national data that supports individual journeys and furthers collective knowledge about the Enviroschools network. We'll be in touch!



# Out and about

## Fat godwits are among estuary finds

"Whananaki School's estuary watchdog project is still making interesting discoveries, six years' on," says primary EnviroSchools facilitator Julie Holt.

Students are caring for the tidal area, carrying out cockle counts, noting bird life, finding new things, such as *Polycladida* (an unusual pink flat worm) and discovering the spread of eel grass, a health indicator for the estuary.

Recent scurries of many godwits, feeding up large before leaving the shores and flying around the world, were of special interest and significance.

The children take their kaitiaki role seriously, monitoring changes that impact on the estuary and keeping their community informed.



*Whananaki School estuary watchdogs regularly observe the changes in their unique backyard.*

## Springbank's bug hotel

Bugs are busy checking out their new accommodation at Springbank School where students have built a bug hotel made from recycled materials such as pallets filled with natural materials to attract insects.

Teachers Rosie Palmer and Jess van Weerd and EnviroSchools facilitator Eden Hakaraia are working with the four and five year-olds from the school's Headstart class, a transition class before junior school.

Every Friday the children enjoy a bushwalk through more than 15,000 trees planted on the school grounds. The youngsters have investigated the waterways in their area and a study of native animals and insects has led to the bug hotel which helps attract beneficial insects and other creatures into the school gardens.



*Springbank School students enjoy watching insects in their funky bug hotel.*

## Kaipara Harbour exploration



Ruawai College students are exploring their local environment and the history of the Kaipara Harbour as part of a new cross curricular project-based learning programme in their junior school.

Secondary EnviroSchools facilitator, Jacque Knight, having secured Board approval, is working alongside teachers Kirsty Batters and Marsha Finlay to develop the project which has started with a visit to the Matakohē Museum.

Other aspects of the project include local industry such as oyster farming, fishing and ecotourism as well as the ecosystems and rare species in their wetland and harbour environment.

*Ruawai students enjoy a visit to Matakohē Museum as part of their Kaipara Harbour studies.*

## Animal pests under siege

Orouaiti School's enviroschool sleuths have discovered evidence of rats, mice, female stoats and possums since they started their mustelid tracking and trapping project.

With the help of the council's Kaitiaia area officer Mike Knight and primary EnviroSchools facilitator Eden Hakaraia, Year 5/6 students are focussing on animal pests in their school wetlands.

Under the guidance of teacher Rob Arrowsmith, they have made their own tracking tunnels and are currently building 26 boxes that will serve as traps. The next step will be to place the traps and start catching the identified pests.

*Orouaiti school pupils are proud of their tracking tunnels.*





# Enviroschools Northland



## Targeting weasels, stoats and ferrets



Project Mustelid students listen intently to their tutor, Biosecurity Projects Manager Kane McElrea.

Many of the students attending this year's Project Mustelid Enviroschools courses have been inspired to use their new-found trapping skills to kill weasels, stoats and ferrets.

They responded enthusiastically to two hands-on skills workshops held in Whangārei and the mid-North where they found out more about the damage mustelids cause to the environment and learnt how to trap the pests.

"It was fun, I found out a lot of new things and now I want to help save the kiwi," is one of the comments made by the participants who came from Dargaville High School, Kaitia and Northland Colleges, Tauraroa Area School and Te Rangi Aniwanuiwa.

## Dates to diary

### ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS FUND (ELF)

**MAY 5**

Applications close

### MARINE METRE SQUARED TEACHER WORKSHOP

**MAY 9**

Whangarei Boys' High School, 4-5pm  
For further information email:  
[marine-studies@otago.ac.nz](mailto:marine-studies@otago.ac.nz)

### PROJECT MUSTELID

**MAY 24** Wildspur Lodge, Taheke

**MAY 25** Kiwi North, Whangārei  
Assessment workshops

### WAIRESTORATION – WaiFencing

**MAY 22/30** Far North

**MAY 26** Whangārei  
Skills workshops

### ENVIROSCHOOLS

#### KINDERGARTENS WORKSHOP

**MAY 29** 10am-3pm

Northland Kindergarten Assn, Whangārei

### PROJECT POSSUM

**JUNE 13 - 14** Lonsdale Park, near Kaero

**JUNE 15 - 16** Tangihua Lodge, Whangārei

**JUNE 19 - 20** Tangihua Lodge, Whangārei

**JUNE 21 - 22** Lake Waikare Education

Centre, Kai iwi Lakes

### WAIRESTORATION – WaiFencing

**JULY 4** Far North

**JULY 5** Mid North

**JULY 6** Whangārei

Assessment workshops



## Enviroschools Northland Team



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