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
Seaweek.

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 Kaitāia 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
Kia ora koutou

Haere mai nau mai to May 2017’s Enviroschools newsletter

Welcome! to eight new Enviroschools – Hora Hora, Kaingaroa, Matakohe, 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

Apply now for ELF funding

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

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

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.

Kaipara Harbour exploration

Ruwai 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 Matakohe 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.

Animal pests under siege

Oruaiti 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 Kaitaia 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.

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.
Targeting weasels, stoats and ferrets

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, Kaitaia and Northland Colleges, Tauraroa Area School and Te Rangi Aniwaniwa.

Dates to diary

**ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS FUND (ELF)**
MAY 5
Applications close

**MARINE METRE SQUARED TEACHER WORKSHOP**
MAY 9
Whangaréi Boys’ High School, 4-5pm
For further information email: 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 Kaeo
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