



Winter 2011

Native fish up close and personal

The new Genesis Energy Freshwater Aquarium



Students can now meet the native fish of New Zealand face to face with the opening of the Genesis Energy Freshwater Aquarium at the Tongariro National Trout Centre in Turangi. The aquarium extends the learning experience of Taupō for Tomorrow through the introduction of more species that depend on cool, clear, clean fresh water.

The freshwater journey starts with a central tank that represents the bubbling busy brooks favoured by the bullies, and flows to quiet tanks that showcase the fish who prefer calm, still waters such as inanga and eels/tuna. Pest fish are displayed behind jail bars, and freshwater weeds are contrasted with native freshwater plants to help children and adults to identify the threats to our precious freshwater ecosystems.

The aquarium is a great opportunity to see our native fish as they are hard to find in the wild as they like to hide, and many are nocturnal. Learning becomes real when the children realise that the remarkably sizeable and beautiful fish they are observing in the kōkopu tank are in fact the adult versions of the fish eaten in a kiwi whitebait fritter!

Striking the Balance

Everything needs water, how do we share it?

‘Striking the Balance’ is the overarching theme that is being celebrated at the Tongariro National Trout Centre by all the groups involved. Wildlife and the fishery need clean freshwater, so do white water rafters and the hydroelectricity companies. How do we all work together to look after this precious resource for the future?



The Tongariro Trout Society have upgraded the visitor centre to reflect the need for clean freshwater for trout to survive so that trout fishing continues to thrive. Genesis Energy, who are giving back to the river it takes from to produce electricity, financially supports Taupō for Tomorrow and has sponsored the new aquarium and some of the new visitor centre displays. The Department of Conservation who manage the fishery, freshwater and native bird and fish populations are also excited about this new theme.

Fantastic Whio

The new freshwater education resource



Whio / blue duck are also an indicator species for clean freshwater along with trout and the invertebrates that both species eat. ‘Fantastic Whio’ is the perfect addition to Taupō for Tomorrow and offers both classroom learning and field trip options throughout the Tongariro, which is home to the whio.

Highland Intermediate of the Hawkes Bay was the first school to trial the new education resource. The first day was classroom learning about how whio are suited to the river habitat and about how they have to share their rivers with other life and river users. Day two saw the learners see whio in their natural environment on the Whakapapa River with whio ranger Bubs Smith. The quality of questions and engagement of the students was testament to the learning that occurred on day one.

Water Sustains life

Waipahihi kids can tell you all about it

Drinking, eating, cleaning, playing, these are just some of the many things that humans, animals and plants share our limited amount of freshwater for. These were the ideas that the students of Waipahihi School of Taupō were thinking about in term one. The *whole* school – all 20 classes - travelled to spend a day learning about the freshwater of the Tongariro region.



Learning with LEARNZ

The virtual freshwater ecology field trip



Learnz ambassadors Egbert, PJ Bear, and Candy Floss this year got to white water raft down the Tongariro River for the first time! Rafting was a good way to demonstrate our freshwater community striking a balance. Genesis Energy maintains a minimum flow of the rivers because both rafters and who like to surf the rapids. Another connection is that Tongariro River Rafting founded and

continues to run a rat and stoat trapping project along the Tongariro River to help protect the who. Both Tongariro River Rafting and Genesis Energy sit on the Blue Duck Charitable Trust. It's a good example of a win-win-win situation!

Not every school can visit Turangi, so we take the wonderful freshwater stories to the schools of New Zealand with LEARNZ virtual field trips. 66 schools signed up this year for the freshwater ecology field trip. The fishery scientists and 'Didymo Dave' were in action again for the 5th year running. As well as rafting being new to the trip this year, so was the first virtual tour of the new aquarium!

Ranger Anna

The new kid on the block

Ranger Mike needs some help! So many schools want to come to Turangi for Taupō for Tomorrow that Mike wasn't allowed to take a holiday or get sick! So Taupō for Tomorrow would like to welcome ranger Anna McKnight who is here to give a helping hand. Ranger Anna works for the Department of Conservation in community relations for the Taupō-nui-ā-tia area.



“I am really enjoying learning about how special clean freshwater is, and love meeting all the creatures that make it their home – trout, whio, kōkopu, eels and whio!” Anna has been a Department of Conservation ranger in Ruapehu and Aoraki / Mt Cook helping children learn all about the birds and plants found in colder climates. Anna is learning to fly fish, she hasn't caught her first fish yet, so she thought she would borrow this taxidermy trophy in the meantime!



I can't wait to introduce you to our native fish!!

[Book here now](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Nicholson". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline.

Mike Nicholson
July 2011