

# Hands-on wānanga for Katikati students

Students from Katikati Primary school joined 40 Western Bay of Plenty schoolchildren for two days of hands-on biosecurity lessons.

The Katikati pupils were among those selected to work alongside scientists, iwi and other experts in both marine and native bush environments.

The culturally-infused programme was part of a biosecurity week events calendar co-ordinated by the newly-launched Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital collective.

On Thursday, October 18 the students gathered at Tauranga Bridge Marina to check pest crab traps and study aquatic species alongside scientists from Waikato University's coastal marine field station, as well as staff from Manaaki Te Awanui, NIWA and the Department of Conservation.

On Friday, they headed for the bush, at Hot Springs Rd near Katikati. The two-day iwi-led wānanga aimed to help young people identify, understand and combat the invasive pest species that threaten the region.

Pupils from all five participating schools were encouraged to share the new knowledge with their whānau and classmates. Each teacher and student received an education pack from the university and similar packs were issued on the second day of terrestrial pest activities, so participants could continue being kaitiaki beyond the day's activities.

Reon Tuanau, who is overseeing the programme on



Miles Jonson from Katikati Primary School makes use of the kauri dieback prevention station on the Tuahu Track during the Mana Taiao event.

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behalf of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Te Rangī Iwi Trust, hoped the Mana Taiao programme would help protect Tauranga Moana from future biosecurity incursions.

"We're in a very, very scary time in terms of biosecurity with the invasive species," Reon said.

"This port is the busiest export port in New Zealand, also we've got a busy airport, so we've got all these threats . . . surrounding us.

"We need to work with our rangatahi, our young ones, and we need to start arming them. Today is about passing on knowledge, starting to get them thinking around biosecurity . . . and hopefully, in the years to come, they become the leaders of the future in terms of protecting the taonga (treasure) that we have here."

Dr Kaeden Leonard, biosecurity specialist at the Coastal Marine Field Station, echoed Mr Tuanau's biosecurity fears.

"There definitely needs to be a lot more education out there with regards to how we could be affected," Kaeden said.

"It's not just the marine industry. It's all of us. And so these sorts of wānanga for our youth are a really important part of our awareness campaign."

The wānanga is the result of a collaboration between the University of Waikato and Tauranga Moana iwi, Manaaki Te Awanui, Kiwifruit Vine Health, Department of Conservation, Predator Free BOP, Manaaki Whenua, Landcare Trust, BOP Regional Council, NIWA and MPI.



Katikati Primary student Manuera Wharekawa shows off the rat-trap he painted, along with an intended victim, during the Mana Taiao event at the Tuahu Kauri track.



Students from Te Puna Primary School in front of the Tuahu Kauri during the Mana Taiao event.

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