



Empowering communities, restoring nature



AONGATETE NATURE EDUCATION PROGRAMME TEACHER INFORMATION



AONGATETE EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2019 TEACHER INFORMATION

The Aongatete Forest Project (AFP) is a 500 ha pest managed area in the Kaimai Mamaku Conservation Park, located between Katikati and Tauranga. The project began in 2006 with pest control over 245 ha, followed by extension of this area to 500 ha in 2013.

The purpose of the AFP was to demonstrate and advocate for the desperate need to provide larger scale pest control across the Kaimai Mamaku Conservation Park to prevent further decline of this area.

The Aongatete Forest Project kaupapa provides a fantastic opportunity for students to

- discover how incredibly unique New Zealand is
- gain an insight into many of the conservation challenges in New Zealand
- learn a set of practical conservation skills they can use to make a positive difference in their communities.



Titipounamu/Rifleman, Aotearoa's smallest bird, were first confirmed as present at Aongatete around 2013. Titipounamu are a declining endemic New Zealand species at risk from introduced mammalian predators and like so many of our native species they are cavity nesters. Due to the loss of suitable natural nesting sites nest-boxes can provide a low cost and non-lethal method to protect rifleman nests from predators. Late last year the first confirmed breeding success of titipounamu in a nest box was recorded at Aongatete!

OVERVIEW

The environmental science focus of the Aongatete Education Programme (AEP) is delivered via a range of **hands-on activities** carried out by conservation field staff here at Aongatete and similar conservation sites across the country. This focus allows students to gain experience and insight into many of the ecological issues we are currently facing in Aotearoa and just as importantly a new set of skills they can employ to make a positive contribution to conservation in New Zealand.

Mātauranga Māori content is also included throughout the programme to illustrate Te Ao Māori and the prominent role pūtaiao/science holds in Māori conservation practice.

Key Concepts:

- Conservation of New Zealand's biodiversity
- New Zealand's unique biodiversity/ taonga
- Native, endemic and introduced species
- Interdependence of living things, habitats and ecosystems
- Predator Free New Zealand
- Sustainability
- Personal and social responsibility for action/ kaitiakitanga
- Heritage – changing relationships between people, place and environment

Note: Mātauranga Māori principals are delivered alongside all key concepts



Pest control is essential if we are to (restore/halt the decline of) Aongatete and the greater Kaimai Mamaku Conservation Park.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Your visit to Aongatete

Students arrive at the entrance to Aongatete where the students and staff are welcomed more formally by AEP educators who then share with students the kaupapa/ purpose of their field trip to Aongatete: gaining an insight into many of the environmental challenges in New Zealand and learning a set of practical conservation skills they can use to make a positive difference in their communities.

PREDATOR FREE NZ: pest control theory and practice

- Pests – where did they come from? Why are they considered pests? How can we control them?
- Pest monitoring - tracking cards, chew track cards, lures, traps and trapping techniques.



Identifying animal tracks: exotic or native?



Up close and personal with the pests

It seems wherever you go people are talking about Predator Free NZ! The AEP biosecurity session is an experiential educator led investigation of this topic that makes full use of the senses (smell, touch, taste, sight and hearing), actively engaging students in pest management theory and practice and importantly getting students to discuss the many issues around pest control.

HĪKOI: Experiencing Aongatete!

Time is spent out in Aongatete exploring and engaging in conservation field work. Learning stations are sited along the walking trail specifically designed and located to break the hīkoi into manageable stages (physically and mentally). Hands-on engagement and exploration is encouraged where possible at each educator led station to enable students to better process information and ideas.

Selection of conservation science activities that can form part of the day:

- Reptiles: monitoring theory and techniques – mark, release & recapture.
- Invertebrates: monitoring theory and techniques, use of artificial refugia.
- Bird specific
 - What species are in Aongatete – present and past.
 - 5 minute bird counts.
 - Artificial nest boxes.
 - Bird bands: reading/recording.
- Plants
 - Rongoā.
 - How they vary and the different roles they play in a forest.
 - Biosecurity: Keeping our forests safe from diseases.



Birds, bands and binoculars



Students working out how to assemble an invertebrate monitoring device

The actual activities delivered and depth of discussion throughout the day varies depending on the age and prior learning of the students.

FAQ's

Are there toilets and fresh water at Aongatete?

Yes there are.

Who has developed the programme and who will be delivering it?

Bay Conservation Alliance (BCA) led by our nature education manager Brian Ireland has developed the programme. BCA operates in the Bay of Plenty with the aim to support, sustain and grow community-led environmental restoration and nature conservation. Brian has spent the last 6 years developing and managing education programmes at Auckland Zoo – including Rotoroa Island and Tāwharanui. Before that he was the Education and Visitor Experience manager at Zealandia: Karori Sanctuary. Before that he was a Deputy Principal/classroom teacher...that's him back to the year 2000. BCA is excited to have Brian, delivering the programme along with a number of highly skilled environmental educators.

What age students is this suitable for?

Our programme is suitable for students in Year 4 and up.

How long is the actual programme?

Its about 2hrs of delivery with 30 minutes allowed for kai. 1 hour is dedicated to things pest related and another hour to monitoring and more directly looking after our native species. But we can talk through your needs (the age and stage of where your students are) and tailor if possible.

Do you have a generic RAMS/ Risk Analysis and Management System form available for my Aongatete visit (to make my life as a teacher easier!)?

Yes we do...because we want to make life easier for teachers.

Is there 'free time' for schools to do their own exploring?

Time may be set aside for students to do their own self-guided activities under the guidance and care of their own teachers. Talk this through with the AEP team.

Is it possible to have a pre-visit at our school with the Aongatete educator with our staff?

It would be a pleasure – in fact we would strongly recommend it as it helps ensure that your visit to Aongatete is a success. It allows us to discuss the content we deliver and what we can achieve in your time at Aongatete.

BCA's education programme is proudly supported by:





www.bayconservation.nz
www.aongateteforest.org