

## Toitōi 31 Bonus Activity: Kaitiakitanga



### READ

*Kaitiaki* by Sienna Macpherson, age 10 - page 64  
*Our Toheroa Experience* by Lily Erskine and Maddy Hays, age 12 - page 70



### LEARN

Compare and contrast Sienna's story with Lily and Maddy's report. Both of these pieces of writing are about paying attention to our environment. What are the similarities and differences between the two texts? Make a list.



### CREATE

Write a poem, a story or a field report that demonstrates kaitiakitanga. Share your writing with a friend and discuss the different choices you have made.



### ILLUSTRATE

Create a mixed media picture inspired by your writing. Plan your artwork carefully and make notes about the techniques, colours and materials you would like to use. Discuss your plan with your friend and finalise your plan.



### SHARE

Submit your own writing, artwork or both for publication in Toitōi and begin a conversation with other young New Zealanders through the arts.





## Kaitiaki

It's a scorching day and the sun beats down on my skin. It looks like we aren't the only ones who think it is the perfect day for swimming at the beach. Hundreds of people are dotted along the bay, colouring it with bright sun umbrellas. A light breeze blows through my hair, tickling my face.

"Race you to the rock pools," my little brother, Liam, shouts.

"Ya coming, Ruth?" I ask, glancing at my older sister. She has her head bent down, texting her friends.

"Yeah, in a sec," Ruth mumbles, not looking up.

I roll my eyes and sprint off.

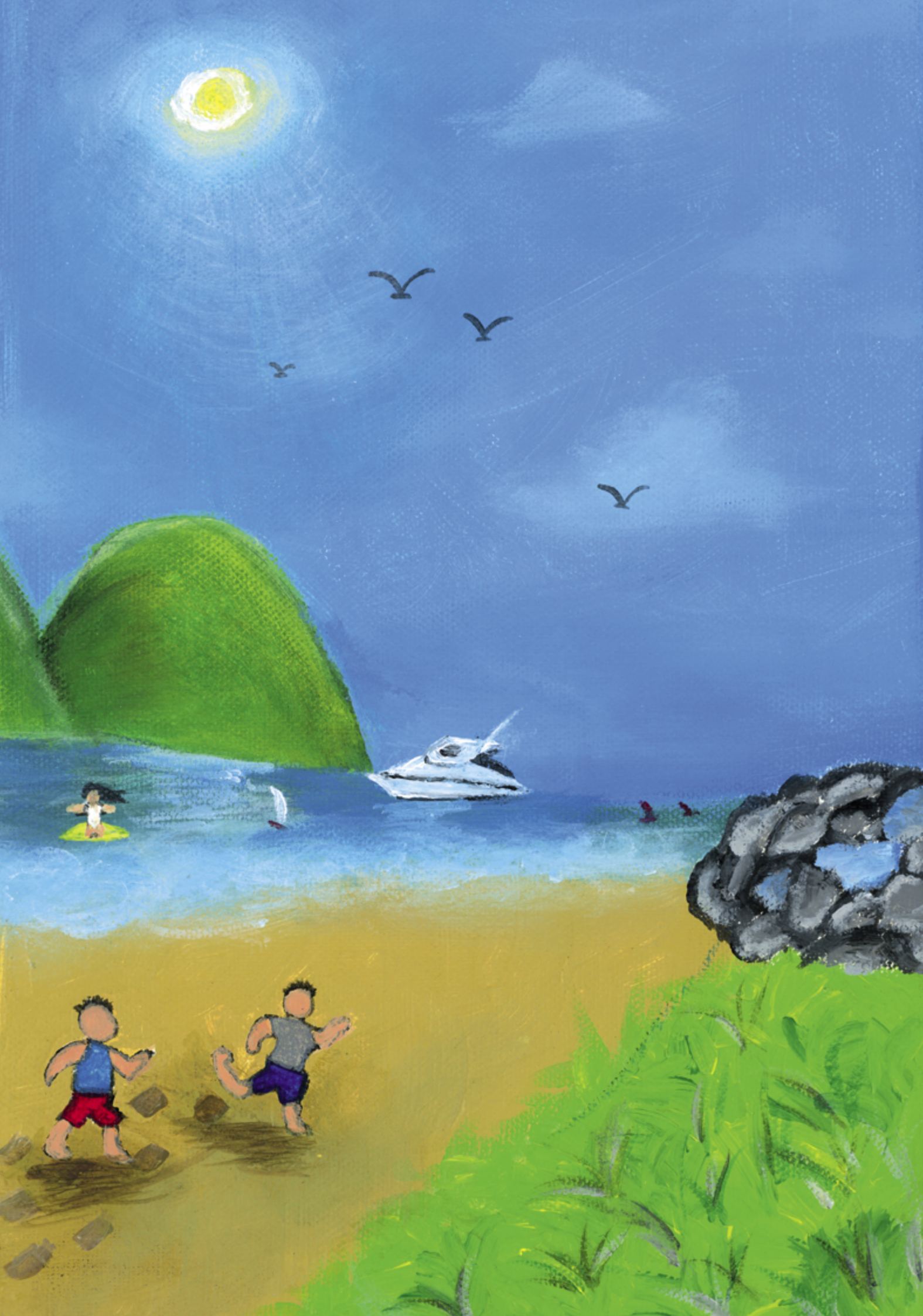
Stumbling over the sand, I race towards the rock pools, shielding my eyes from the sun. Dried seaweed crunches beneath my feet and pierces my skin. I scamper up the sides of the pools, careful not to knock off any of the cat's eyes. Liam is already there.

I dip my toes into the water, watching crabs scuttle under rocks as our shadows pass over them. Shrimp dart from under our feet as we wade deeper. Bracing myself for the cold, I submerge my body. Red kelp sways around my legs.

Suddenly, a blur of colour zooms past. I whip around. There it is again! I part the kelp with my hands and then let it close around me. Shafts of sunlight shimmer in the water and make it feel magical. The sea sponge on the rocks feels like velvet swirling against my skin.

**Suddenly, a blur of colour zooms past. I whip around. There it is again! I part the kelp with my hands and then let it close around me**





Amongst the seaweed I spot a delicate, beautiful seahorse. I am overwhelmed with wonder. The seahorse glides towards me, changing colour to match my wetsuit. I stare in amazement until my lungs start to burst. I break the surface of the rock pool, spinning around to find Liam.

Breathlessly, I tell him what I saw, my words tumbling on top of each other. Liam is wide-eyed. When I get to the part about the seahorse changing colour, a big grin stretches across his face.

“Do you think it’s still there?” he asks excitedly.

I nod and we dive under, feeling the slimy, swirling seaweed brush along our skin, sending shivers up our bodies. The seahorse is still there, shyly peeking out of the swaying kelp. Turning around underwater, I grin at Liam. He smiles back. We spend the rest of the day exploring the rock pools.

On the car ride home, I rest my head against the window, thinking about the day’s adventures. I feel so lucky to live in a place where we are surrounded by such a beautiful, natural world. It is sad to think that we are slowly destroying our planet. I vow to do my part in being kaitiaki and protecting places like this.



Words by Sienna MacPherson, age 10  
Pictures by Ranmeng Yang, age 12





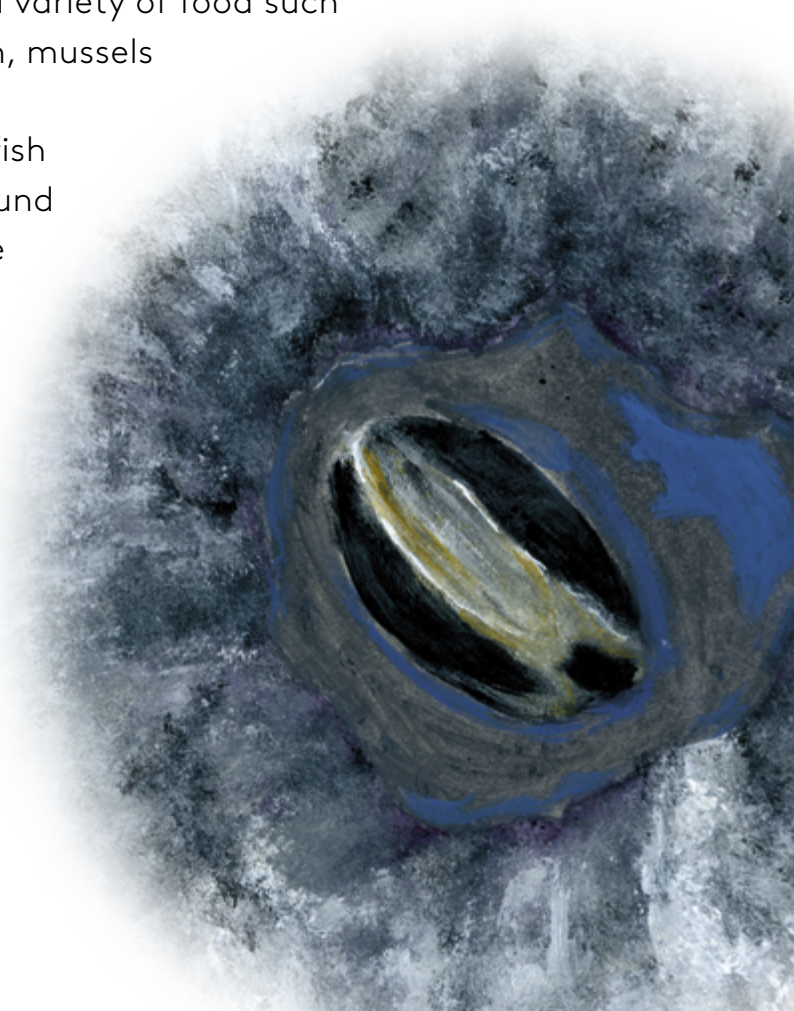
## Our Toheroa Experience

On the 18th of May, 2022, Rata Class of Hauroko Valley Primary experienced something that most kids our age don't get to do. We had the opportunity to dig for toheroa with New Zealand TikTok star, Terressa Kollat, at Oreti Beach.

We learnt a lot about our local area and about kaimoana. We had the opportunity to eat a variety of food such as crayfish, mutton bird, venison, mussels and pāua.

A toheroa is a very large shellfish that is found on beaches all around Aotearoa New Zealand. They live on the high-tide mark. They are commonly found at Oreti Beach in Southland.

Toheroa means 'long tongue' in Māori and was considered a delicacy in the 1900s. This large, long 'tongue' — which is actually a foot, not a tongue — is used to dig into the sand, around 15-30 centimetres deep, with a wriggling-type movement.







Toheroa have two tube-like things called siphons and when they dig, they leave two holes. When the waves wash over them, food — like plankton — is brought in through one hole and the other hole spits out waste. Gulls, snapper and other fish prey on toheroa but they are a predator to none.

Back before the 1960s, toheroa were very common and there were no restrictions — you were allowed to dig as many as you liked. However, many people took advantage of this and took more than they needed. Since 1969, you need a permit to dig for toheroa and you can only take 50 at a time. Aunty Terressa had received a permit from Murihiku Marae, our local marae in Invercargill.

When you dig for toheroa you must use your hands; you can't use a shovel. The toheroa must be larger than 10 centimetres. If you happen to catch a smaller one, you must place it back in the original hole, cover it up with sand and leave it to grow larger and breed. It is illegal to catch small toheroa and keep them.

Toheroa are declining due to lack of food, availability, climate change, weather, toxic algal blooms, predation, harvesting, impact from vehicles, and change in land use.

We had such a great experience digging for toheroa. It is really fun — slightly gross when you touch the tongue though! We've learnt how our environment is special and we don't want to ruin what our land has given us. It was very different from being in the classroom and we loved being part of our community and getting numb fingers at 8:30 in the morning! It was amazing to be given this opportunity.

We are so thankful to everyone who made this trip possible — our teacher, Mrs Harris, and Aunty Terressa. We really appreciate all of your time and effort.

**Since 1969, you need a permit to dig for toheroa and you can only take 50 at a time. Aunty Terressa had received a permit from Murihiku Marae, our local marae in Invercargill**





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SIMILARITIES

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DIFFERENCES

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CREATE

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PLAN YOUR WRITING HERE

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## USE THIS SPACE TO PLAN YOUR ART



WRITE YOUR IDEAS HERE