



## Experiencing Marine Reserves - Te Kura Moana.

### 2020/21 Season Report

#### Overview

The Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme is under the umbrella of the Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) that was established in 2002 - CC #23406. The trust is the national body for the EMR programme which has expanded to eight other regions in New Zealand! The programme itself, however, was actually started in 2001 which has seen 2021 being the 20 year anniversary of the programme! To celebrate EMR has a 3 page spread in the latest [NZ Dive Pacific magazine](#).



The EMR brand is unique; we have an active focus on community engagement and marine conservation. We are committed to delivering safe snorkel excursions. We are an adventure activity safety audit certified (AAO 534). The national expansion of EMR is based on a non-profit franchise concept. Our EMR endorsed providers are organisations throughout the regions that have been given permission to use our brand. All EMR regional coordinators are fully trained by MTSCT and meet our endorsement criteria.

#### What is EMR?

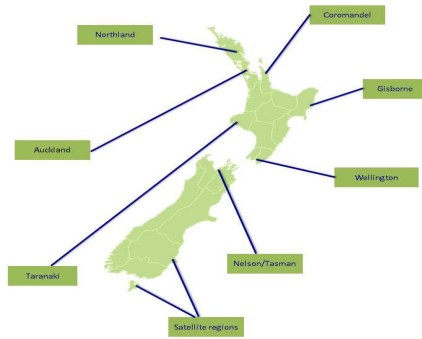
EMR empowers schools and communities by providing hands-on experiences in the ocean. Our goal is to raise awareness, understanding and support for marine conservation throughout Aotearoa (New Zealand) through the provision of dynamic experiential marine education opportunities.

The full EMR programme concept:

- Introduction to marine biodiversity
- Investigation of local/unprotected marine areas
- 1:2 adult/student ratio aim = many whānau (family) share the experience
- Look and learn – no hurting tangaroa's children (marine creatures)

- Experience/research a marine reserve
- Be engaged and inspired
- Make comparisons
- Take ACTION for marine conservation through a kaitiaki action project

EMR has a team of 27 coordinators based in eight regions (with Otago/Rakiura being a satellite region) with our regional provider organisations.



**Wellington**



**Nelson/Tasman**



**Taranaki**



**Tairāwhiti Gisborne**

**He Awa Ora, He Tai Ora,  
Healthy Rivers, Living Sea  
Education Trust**

**Auckland/Northland**



**Coromandel**

**The Friends of Te  
Whanganui-A-Hei Marine  
Reserve Trust**

Since 2001, EMR has provided snorkel experiences to **147,905** people. Of these, **73,180** experienced a NZ marine reserve or rāhui. We have delivered **299** community guided snorkel and kayak events to date, engaging **24,207** people in our EMR organised engagement events. We have also delivered **102,318** snorkel experiences for students and inspired 2779 kaitiaki action projects that have reached the wider community and school whānau.

During the summer of 2020/21, we had **47** Community Guided Snorkel and Kayak days throughout NZ, involving **3,911** participants. A summary of some of the key statistics can be found below.



## EMR Statistics since 2001

### NATIONAL



### NORTHLAND & AUCKLAND



## Highlights

### Auckland

Auckland had another fantastic season with running 19 events across Tāmaki Makaurau. Schools in the region have also fully embraced the 'Mountains To Sea' concept that the team has developed further over the past year, integrating both freshwater and marine education in school delivery and collaborating with the Whitebait Connection coordinators.



*The Mountains To Sea Team celebrating the award*

### Northland

EMR was named Te Te Tohu Matua-Supreme Award winner at Northland Regional Council's annual 'Whakamānawa ā Taiao - Environmental Awards'. It was a great honour for our Northland team to receive this award. This was out of 47 entries and recognised our long and outstanding contribution to Northland's environment over the last 20 years.

### Taranaki

Highlands Intermediate successfully completed their litter intelligence survey and [uploaded their data](#) to the website. They found 664 items in total, of which 490 were plastic pieces or fragments.

The team is also looking into bringing the Whitebait Connection freshwater education programme to Taranaki to run education programmes 'from the mountains to the sea'.

### Wellington

Our Wellington team has had another wildly busy, but successful season with a record number of 604 people attending their community snorkel days. Over 1200 students and 280 adults from 26 different schools and community groups participated in marine experiences and community events. Another one of the season highlights was display of a student's



EMR inspired artwork on one of the Wellington Public Transport buses.



*Bill Kelly (8) proudly presenting his bus design to the public.*

### Nelson/Tasman

Tasman Bay Guardians worked hard to deliver the full EMR programme to Brooklyn School in Motueka and also ran the Port Nelson Cable Bay Snorkel Day. Here is a awesome presentation of the EMR programme and action projects from Brooklyn School <https://youtu.be/OXhQFAvsBiU>.

### Rakiura Satellite

This year, the Wellington team was able to run another EMR programme with Halfmoon Bay School on Rakiura Stewart Island to continue to run Rakiura as a satellite region. The programme inspired some amazing artwork as shown below.



*Students from Rakiura produced some of the most amazing EMR artwork in the country*



## Inspiring action

EMR action projects foster kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and facilitate action to address marine issues. Some schools go above and beyond with their action projects and creativity to help look after their marine environment.

Brooklyn School in the [Nelson/Tasman District](#) organised the “Big Dig Day” whereby all 100 students from the school attended a day of planting out the restoring wetland at Stephens Bay. As part of the day they also organised other activities including a wetland walk, beach exploration, penguin learning and mask making and a marine-threats obstacle course. Dovedale school also organised an [art exhibition!](#)

In [Taranaki](#), Moturoa School is doing monthly beach cleans at Ngāmotu Beach and Highlands Intermediate have committed to survey Tapuae Marine Reserve through the [Litter Intelligence Programme](#).

Students from Wesley Primary School in [Auckland](#) got the whole school involved in their action project exhibition day and invited the community to come along. Some standout actions included a litter picking robot and manufacturing useful household items out of recycled plastic milk bottles. Some students also created a video and letter to help convince Fonterra to change their milk packing in schools to more sustainable alternatives.

Thanks to new sponsorship from **Wettie Spearfishing and Wetsuits** - we were able to support delivery of the EMR programme to our satellite EMR programme on [Rakiura Stewart Island](#). Tessa from Halfmoon Bay School took inspiring action by gaining a permit from the Department of Conservation and removed a total of 500kg of Undaria seaweed from the coastline of Rakiura. Students from the school also raised money for local conservation initiatives and projects and wrote a letter to the government to limit fishing and advocate for more marine protection.

One class from Makauri School, [Tairāwhiti Gisborne](#), followed up from their EMR programme with a beach clean up at Makarori Beach and from their rubbish audit they realised that separate compartment bins (recycling, rubbish, waste etc) should be implemented and installed at our other beaches such as Makarori (Gisborne only has some at our town beaches – Waikanae and Midway) so they are completing letters to council to advocate for this and the waste management team are definitely keen for this to be a part of their waste management plan. They also wrote letters to DoC to advocate for the marine reserve to remain as a reserve when it comes up for review. Hunter is also taking a next step and writing a letter to the Prime Minister regarding the EMR Programme, his experience at the reserve and that he thinks it should stay as a marine reserve for future tamariki.



## Community Led action

### Kamo Intermediate marine pest detection survey

Room 5 from Kamo Intermediate (KIS) joined Northland Regional Council with their annual marine pest detection survey in the Whangārei Harbour Marine Reserve at Reotahi. The group of students helped to remove 14 Mediterranean Fanworm from the Harbour (3 from the KIS group). A special permit was obtained to remove the marine pest from this marine reserve. While we were happy to be able to find and remove this pest, it's a worry for our marine environment!



### Blaze Nicholas's Seagrass project

Blaze has been part of the EMR programme since day dot! He has participated in EMR with his primary and intermediate school. He has also more recently volunteered as a trainee snorkel guide and drone photographer for EMR events. This year for his school science fair project, he decided to monitor a seagrass patch in the Whananaki estuary during the night and day at high tide. Check out his [video](#) to see the results. He found a lot more creatures inside the seagrass compared to outside, and found the seagrass to come alive at night with bait!

### Love Rimurimu project

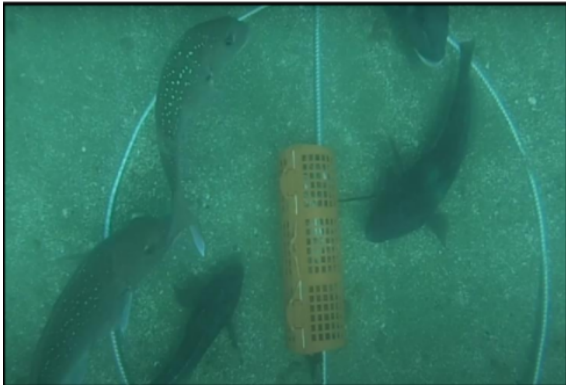
In its second year of the programme, the Wellington team has continued to develop resources that are going to be available on their [programme website](#) and the Science Learning Hub platform. The Love Rimurimu - Restoration project has also received funding for the active restoration of rimurimu across different sites in the Wellington Harbour.

### iNaturalist Database

EMR continues to use the iNaturalist Database as a platform to record marine observations. Most recently EMR has primarily used it to record observations of marine pests like Mediterranean Fanworm.



## Kapiti Primary School



*Underwater baited camera monitoring program  
BigBRUVer*

The Guardians of Kāpiti Marine Reserve are deploying baited cameras to monitor biodiversity and abundance of fish species in and around Kāpiti marine reserve. The students are following DOC methodology to count and identify the fish captured on video. The data is being compiled in a database. This project has the potential of being long term and will contribute to scientific monitoring of the marine reserve. Students have also expressed interest in the Litter Intelligence monitoring programme and have

requested funding for LittaTraps that they will be using in storm drains across the school.

## Litter Intelligence Surveys

Several Schools, including Highlands Intermediate ([here](#)), Kāpiti Primary School and Moturoa School have actively contributed to the Litter Intelligence Database, adding valuable data to this project to inform future steps to reduce litter on our coastline and the moana.

## Celebrating student success and leadership

This year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Poor Knights competition trip in partnership with Dive! Tutukaka took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> May and included 34 students and 29 guardians from as far north as Waiharara and as far south as Rakiura - Stewart Island. Students are selected based on their action projects undertaken and enthusiasm they show when studying & experiencing the marine environment.

In addition to the opportunity to represent their school or region for the EMR ACTION prize, we offer the EMR Ocean Art prize. The Bobby Stafford-Bush Foundation supports this special prize for young kiwis that have experienced the marine environment with EMR and display that passion and experience through art. The national expansion of EMR in the regions is supported by The Tindall Foundation

Action projects included removal of invasive seaweed, citizen science fish surveys, shellfish monitoring, wetland restoration, a mufti day and ocean disco fundraiser, presentations to parents, upcycling waste to furniture, murals and marine artwork on a double decker bus!

Special guests included rangatahi/taitamariki who are in training with EMR thanks to the support of Foundation North and students from the first competition trip twenty years ago! This time Cameron Pene experienced the Poor Knights with his daughter Dylan -Rose. Since





2022, we have taken representatives from 351 schools, totalling 500 students on this annual trip!

Video from Taranaki student: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBA4rOKmzTc>



Group photo from the Poor Knights Competition trip in May 2021

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### Feedback from participants

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*"This was eye opening and helped a lot of people realise how precious the marine life is and how we need to take care of everything inside the waters" - Year 12 student, Heretaunga College (Wellington)*

*"I always loved the sea and marine creatures but i know now that when i dive and snorkeling I have to be careful with fish." - Year 8 students from Halfmoon Bay School, Rakiura*

*"Seeing how successful marine reserves are at protecting biodiversity increased my care about the marine environment by wanting more marine reserves established around NZ" - Year 8 student from Tamaki College, Auckland*

*"Enviro awareness for the kids and gaining confidence in the water (safely). The team was awesome, thank you."- Marcus Arnesen, Whangārei*



## Community Guided Snorkel Days

During the summer of 2020/21 we had 44 Community Guided Snorkel and Kayak days throughout NZ, involving 3,805 participants. Community events continue to play an important role for EMR and engage the wider community.

EMR has continued to expand the range of experiences and locations and is able to cater for a wide range of snorkelers - from complete novices to experienced freedivers. Especially the 'Adventure snorkel days' to some of the islands in the Hauraki Gulf run by EMR Auckland attract some passionate ocean-lovers and provide a unique opportunity to explore some of the less accessible snorkel sites.

## Volunteer Update

A large team of volunteers continue to support the EMR snorkel days all over the country. Many of them were participants prior to volunteering and they are amazing ambassadors of the EMR programme. Auckland continues to hold volunteer training sessions at the start of the season and have streamlined their volunteer process to build an army of dedicated gold-star volunteers. In total, volunteers have volunteered 10,795 hours of their time, with one of the Auckland top volunteers accumulating 100 hours alone this season.

## Mountains To Sea Conservation Trust Wananga 2021

The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (MTSCT) brought its 14<sup>th</sup> annual Mountains to Sea National Wānanga/Conference to Kennedy Bay in Coromandel April 2021. The event was based at Harataunga Marae where a collective of 60 passionate conservationists, community members, iwi representatives, scientists and other organisations shared stories and discussed the theme of partnerships and how to increase the effectiveness of existing conservation initiatives. Thank you to Ngāti Porou Ki Hauraki for supporting this wānanga. The [video](#) of the event showcases some of the beautiful highlights!



## New projects and conservation initiatives

### EMR Fish of the Year

For [Seaweek 2021](#), EMR launched its inaugural “Fish of the Year” campaign. The campaign was launched to increase awareness for marine conservation and bring the diversity of native fish to a wider public audience. The campaign was a full success with over 450 votes in total. The winning fish of the year 2021 was the Eagle ray (Whai repo).



### Rangatahi Mentorship Programme

This year Northland established a new Rangatahi Environmental Leadership programme. The programme utilises existing mentorship and environmental education frameworks to provide the desired outcomes for participants. Rangatahi have the opportunity to undergo training, volunteer and progress to paid cadetship positions with EMR. On completing the programme participants have an increased knowledge of environmental issues and the actions we need to take to resolve them.



They also have skills and practical experience in implementing the solutions. However, most importantly, they are inspired to protect and restore our shared life-sustaining ecosystems for future generations. The programme was a great success, with strong support from both the participants and their whānau..



## Health and Safety

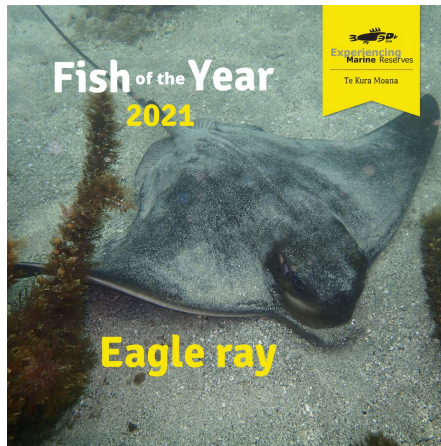
Health and Safety for the team, volunteers, participants and everyone we associate with is our number one priority. As the national umbrella for the programme, MTSCT is accredited Adventure Activity provider (AAO 534) with Outdoors Mark and audited on a regular basis. All snorkelling is run in accordance with the EMR Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs for snorkelling), MTSCT Safety Management System (SMS) and the Safety Audit Standard.

### *Teacher's feedback*

*"Students and teachers were fully engaged and are now keen to take action to protect marine environment. Really great snorkelling equipment and leadership during the snorkelling expeditions. loved seeing them [students] gain so much knowledge and confidence snorkelling in the sea." - Teacher; Newtown Primary School (Wellington)*

*"This is my second time with EMR. It was amazing the first time and outstanding the second. I enjoyed that there were multiple instructors and groups involved the second time round. The time table was full but all complimented each other. Thank you for all your hard work and effort." Teacher from Orakei School (Auckland)*

*"Brilliant programme that increased the awareness of marine conservation in my students "*  
*Teacher from Makauri School (Tairāwhiti Gisborne)*



## EMR in the Media around the country

### National:

- [Young Ocean Explorers interview](#)
- [Poor Knights trip feature](#)

### Northland:

- [Tapotupotu Snorkel Day](#) Te Karere
- [Maitai Bay Snorkel Day](#)
- [EMR Supreme Award](#)

### Taranaki:

- [Moturoa School Fundraiser](#)

### Nelson/Tasman:

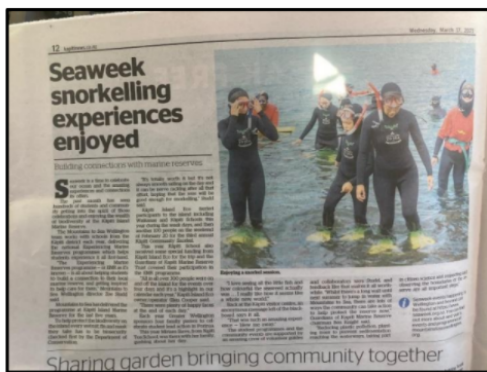
- [Appleby Students River Restoration](#)
- [Brooklyn School Big Dig Day](#)
- [Cable Bay Snorkel Day](#)
- [Student Beach Clean](#)
- [Mana Whaitake event 2021](#)

### Tairāwhiti Gisborne:

- [Poor Knights trip 2021](#)
- [Poor Knights trip 2020](#)

### Wellington:

- [Marine Monitoring Programme](#)
- [Porirua Guardians](#)
- [Wellington bus design](#)
- [When help needs help](#)
- [Te Aho Tū Roa Love Rimurimu video](#)



## National Funders and supporters

- Bobby-Stafford Bush Foundation
- Department of Conservation
- Dive! Tutukaka
- NZAEE - Seaweek
- Sustainable Coastlines
- Tindall Foundation
- Wettle Wetsuits and Spearfishing

## Regional funders and Supporters

### Northland

Foundation North | Henderson Reeves Lawyers | Lotteries- COGS | Sport Northland | Tu Manawa Active Aotearoa | Water Safety NZ | Whananaki CLD | Whangārei District Council |

### Auckland

Hibiscus and Bays Local Board | Fortuna Foundation | Waiheke Local Board | Long Bay Okura Great Parks Society | Albert-Eden Local Board | Papakura Local Board

### Tairāwhiti Gisborne

Department of Internal Affairs | Ministry of Education |

### Wellington

Hutt Mana Charitable Trust | Pelorus Trust | Greater Wellington City Council | Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust | Curious Minds | WWF | Kāpiti Island Eco Tours | New Zealand Community Trust | NIWA | Wellington City Council | Wellington Community Trust

### Nelson/Tasman

Z Energy | Abel Tasman Eco Tours Abel Tasman Sea shuttles | Kaiteriteri



*Cable Bay Snorkel (Nelson/Tasman)*



*Auckland Kayak Day*



*Gisborne Rocky Shore Surveys*



Recreation Reserve Board | Port Nelson | Motueka Top Ten Holiday Park | Guardians of the Sea | Cable Bay Kayaks

## Partnerships

### Northland

Fish Forever | The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs | Te Rarawa Anga Mua Trust | Te Whānau Moana me te Rorohuri hapu | Te Waiariki/Ngati Korora | Northland Regional Council



*Nayland Primary Snorkel Experience*

### Auckland

Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safari | Kelly Tarltons | Hauraki Gulf Forum | Gulf Eco Adventures | Auckland Sea Kayaks | Auckland Sea Shuttle | Neureuter Family (Otata Island) | Waiheke Dive | SUP Waiheke | Long Bay Okura Great Parks Society | Canoe and Kayak | Para Kore Ki Tāmaki | Whangateau Holiday Park | Motutapu Outdoor Education Centre | Fullers Ferries | Auckland Regional Council



*St Frances de Sales School at Taputeranga*

### Tairāwhiti Gisborne

Gisborne District Council | Friends of Te Tapuwae O Rongokako Marine Reserve Trust.

### Nelson

Takahanga Marae | Abel Tasman Eco Tours | Kaikoura Kayaks | Dolphin Encounter | Whale Watch | Events Kaikoura | Ngāti Tama | Cable Bay Kayaks | Abyss Dive | NZ Marine Studies Centre | Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership | Abel Tasman Adventure Hub | Waka Abel Tasman | Whenua Iti Outdoors | Regal NZ King Salmon | Waikawa Dive Centre | NMIT | MOTEC



*Snorkel at Maitai Bay (Northland)*



## Wellington

HECUA | Make Ripples | Papa Taiao | Salvation Army | Sustainable Coastlines | Te Aho Tū Roa | Victoria University Coastal Ecology Lab | Wellington Underwater Club | Conservation Volunteers NZ | Dive Wellington | Enviroschools | Friends of Taputeranga Marine Reserve Trust | NIWA

**Other organisations** that have supported and engaged or collaborated with us through schools, events and action projects

Auckland Zoo | Bennetts Associates | EnviroSchools | Far North Surf Rescue | Goat Island Marine Discovery Centre | Ngati Kahu Social Services | NZAEE | Orbit Audit | Pacific Coast Kayaks | Sealife Kelly Tarlton's | Seashuttle Bay of Islands | Te Aho Tū Roa | TriOceans | Ferrier Family | Young Ocean Explorers



*Ngā Motu Community Snorkel Day*



*Waikanae School at Kapiti Island*

## For more information

**Samara Nicholas, MNZM - Poutokomanawa/Co-director - Marine Lead, [info@emr.org.nz](mailto:info@emr.org.nz)**



**Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) - Te Kura Moana**

National EMR programme areas and contact emails:

Northland – [info@emr.org.nz](mailto:info@emr.org.nz) | Auckland - [auckland@emr.org.nz](mailto:auckland@emr.org.nz) | Gisborne – [gisborne@emr.org.nz](mailto:gisborne@emr.org.nz) | Wellington – [wellington@emr.org.nz](mailto:wellington@emr.org.nz) | Coromandel – [hauraki@emr.org.nz](mailto:hauraki@emr.org.nz) | Nelson – [nelson@emr.org.nz](mailto:nelson@emr.org.nz) | Taranaki – [taranaki@emr.org.nz](mailto:taranaki@emr.org.nz) | Otago/Rakiura – [info@emr.org.nz](mailto:info@emr.org.nz)

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