

I'm in real danger

Classroom conservation activities from:

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Teacher Notes

The Pateke (Brown Teal) is a small dabbling duck endemic to New Zealand. Once it was widespread throughout the country but now is very rare and mostly restricted to Great Barrier Island and coastal valleys of eastern Northland and a few predator-free islands.

The Brown Teal is in real danger of extinction, with fewer than 1000 birds living in the wild in New Zealand.

In this unit we alert our students to this problem and encourage them to adopt sound environmental values and become actively involved in helping to save the Pateke.

Thinking about our environment

- Encourage students to start thinking about their local or (school) environment. Have students describe it, **eg**
 - *does it have bush, trees, or parks?*
 - *is it mostly concrete and tarseal?*
 - *does it have water areas or wetlands to attract bird and animal life?*
 - *are there lots of home gardens?*
- How friendly to native birds and animals do they think their local/school environment is? List reasons.
- Have students ask older family members about how their local environment has changed over time. Can they locate old photographs (library/council/school records) that show what changes have taken place to the local environment?

Crimes against nature

- What do the students know about native bird species that have become extinct? Can they name any? (moa, huia, laughing owl) Brainstorm possible reasons why these species have become extinct.
- Tell students that in the early 1800s we introduced rabbits for hunting and fur. We soon found that rabbits were a pest so we then introduced stoats, ferrets and weasels to control the rabbits.
- Stoats have now been declared the public enemy number one as they kill many thousands of New Zealand birds every year – including 8000 North Island brown kiwi chicks (our national icon) with about another 3000 falling prey to other predators such as ferrets (The brown teal studied later is predated upon by stoats)
- Introduce the idea that many birds in New Zealand – while not extinct, are in real danger and are classed as threatened or endangered species.
- In groups, have students try to identify and list all the factors that can threaten our bird life.

Curriculum Strands:

Science: Making Sense of the Living World
Social Studies: Place and Environment

Learning Intentions:

- Understanding how human intervention and introduced predators can have a very negative effect on our natural environment and native species
- Gathering information and facts to raise student and community awareness of the plight of the Brown Teal – Pateke
- Exploring, developing and putting in to action a class and community plan to help save the brown teal from extinction.

- Did students identify the following:
 - *reduction of habitat such wetland drainage*
 - *wild and domestic cats kill thousands of birds*
 - *birds killed by dogs, stoats, ferrets, rats.*

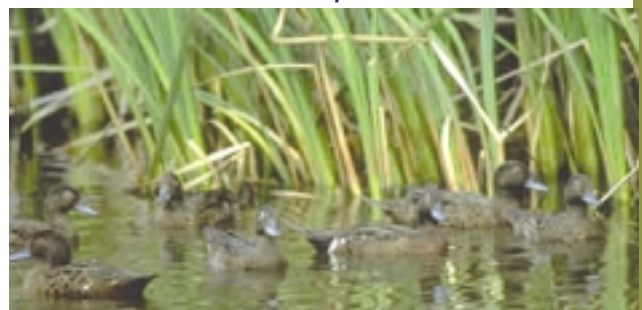
But we can make a difference!

- Tell students that regular stoat, ferret, and wild cat trapping by residents at Port Charles, Coromandel, has been so successful that brown teal and other native birds (including the kiwi) are making a comeback to the area again.

Introducing the Pateke – Brown Teal

- Tell the class that they are going to find out about a special bird only found in New Zealand that is in real danger of becoming extinct – the Pateke, commonly known as the brown teal.
- Tell the students that there are less than 1000 pateke left in New Zealand and if we don't do something now to help them, they will become extinct – another crime against nature.

The perfect habitat for the Pateke



you can help!

www.brownteal.com



Listening to the Problem

- Visit the website www.brownteal.com/site/ and as a class, listen to the spoken introduction on the website.
- Using a New Zealand map, help students locate Great Barrier Island and the 50km stretch on the east coast of Northland from Bay of Islands to Whananaki.
- Have students look at pictures of the pateke on the site. Tell them that the brown teal is about half the size of the common (mallard) duck and they stand about 48cm tall and weigh about half kg as an adult.

Web research – questions and activities

www.brownteal.com/site/ > Click on Kids Track

- Either print out all the sections on Kids Track or divide students into online groups to research specific sections.
- The student task is to find answers to and develop an understanding from each of the following sections.

Endangered

- *what made New Zealand different to all other parts of the world before human beings arrived?*
- *what aspects of early Maori settlement started making life harder for the brown teal?*
- *list the animals prior to European settlement that started the decline of the brown teal.*
- *identify and list all the reasons why the decline of brown teal really accelerated after the arrival of Europeans in New Zealand.*

Webster's Story

- *to what larger family does Webster belong?*
- *what action would Webster and his friends take to stop their family being killed if they were able to?*
- *what does Webster say about his family that proves that they are not just boring brown ducks?*

Hang-outs and Food

- *describe the type of habitat that brown teal need to ensure that they survive*
- *make a restaurant menu that a brown teal would really like to order from*
- *what food that brown teal eat make a good contribution to helping our environment and helping humans?*

Helping Webster and his friends?

- *read carefully through this section, and as a group, make a list of all the things that we can do to ensure that the brown teal does not become extinct*
- *list some of the possible solutions for ensuring the brown teal survives*
- *if we do win the battle for this great little bird, who or what else are we helping at the same time?*
- *finish off your Webster study by solving the puzzles, playing the interactive games, and taking the quiz.*

Identify the Problem

- Through class discussion, ensure that students understand the following aspects of the problem we face in trying to save our precious brown teal:
 - *we must ensure that existing habitat is preserved*
 - *we must ensure that existing habitat is protected from predators*
 - *we need to establish new habitat suitable for the brown teal to re-establish in*
 - *we must ensure this new habitat is kept safe for the brown teal.*

Affirmative Action

- Develop the idea that if we are to save the pateke, we must not just talk about it, we must take positive action. Have groups brainstorm ideas they believe are within their class/school capability to put into action, **eg**

Community Awareness

- *writing letters to the local community newspaper explaining the plight of the brown teal*
- *inviting local council members to the classroom to ask what the council will do to help establish habitat suitable for the pateke*
- *create a display for a local shopping centre or supermarket to raise local awareness*
- *organise a petition to present to the local council to create a suitable local wetland habitat.*

Getting Involved

- *invite a representative from your local DoC office to talk to and engage with the students about how and where they could create a suitable brown teal wetland.*
- *as a class or school, commit to the project and help the class set realistic and achievable project steps.*
- *enthuse and involve parents and families to support and help with the wetland or stream clean-up project.*

Use the contact details on the website to make contact with Kevin and the rest of the Brown Teal Recovery Programme team. They will be pleased to hear of your project and to offer advice!

