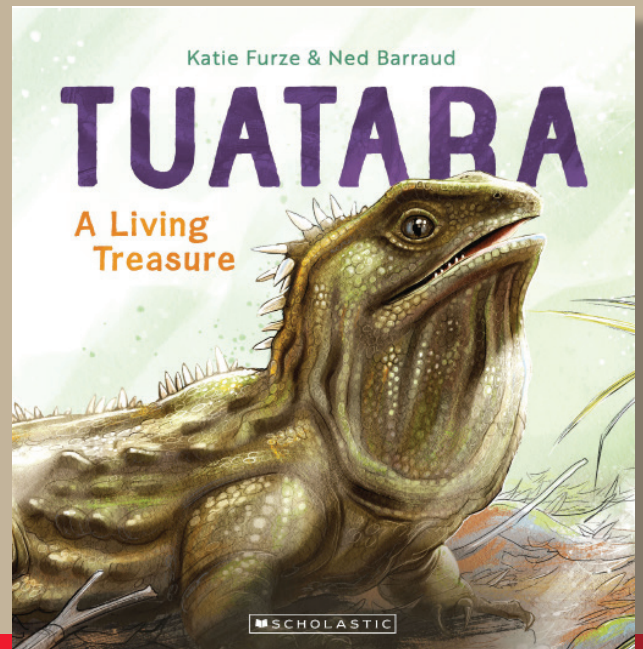


TUATARA

A Living Treasure

By Katie Furze & Ned Barraud



• Reading • Writing • Thinking Skills • Science • Research

Synopsis

On a tiny uninhabited island off the coast of New Zealand, live thousands of birds, lizards, creepy crawlies and tuatara.

Nine leathery eggs lay in an underground nest. One hatches, and a baby tuatara wriggles up through the soil. The story explains the origins of tuatara as the sole survivors of an ancient group of reptiles called Rhynchocephalia, who evolved around 250 million years ago. These animals died out everywhere except in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The hatchling needs to be wary of predators wanting to eat her, but each day she grows bigger and stronger. In ten to fifteen years, she is old enough to find a mate and lay her own eggs. She guards the nest for a week, then returns to the forest. One year later, one of her ten eggs hatches ... and the cycle begins again.

The back matter contains a brief background of tuatara history, and includes a page of interesting facts about tuatara.

About the Author

Katie Furze writes children's fiction and non-fiction, including picture books, short stories, articles, plays, readers and novels. You can read her work in the *New Zealand School Journal*, or *The School Magazine* in Australia. Katie has also written stories in anthologies and readers and plays for educational publishers. *TUATARA: A Living Treasure* is her first non-fiction picture book with Scholastic. Katie has a master's degree in creative writing and is fascinated by science and nature. When she's not reading or writing, she enjoys the outdoors, tramping, yoga, travelling and scuba diving. She lives in Auckland with her family.

About the Illustrator

Ned Barraud studied art in Otago and illustration at Victoria University and has since authored and illustrated a number of children's books including the highly successful 'Explore and Discover' series about different ecosystems in New Zealand, and seven other books on his own, including *Watch out for the Weka*, and 2018's acclaimed book on insects *New Zealand's Backyard Beasts*. Always fascinated by the form and beauty of the animal kingdom, Ned produced *Where is it? A wildlife hunt for Kiwi kids*, in 2020, and since then *What happened to the Moa*, *New Zealand's Backyard Birds*, and *Incredible Journeys: New Zealand Wildlife on the Move*.

He loves to help introduce children to the natural world around them and encourages them to explore it. Ned lives in the misty hills of Karori, Wellington, with his wife and three children.



Writing and Illustration Style

TUATARA: A Living Treasure is written as descriptive non-fiction. A compelling and informative read, the writing is alive with descriptive language and poetic passages. The effect is a text that is joyous to read, and the reader becomes deeply involved in the battle for the little tuatara's survival, rooting for its success.

The well-researched text is paired with stunningly detailed and beautifully accurate, yet evocative watercolour illustrations, complete with cutaway views so the reader can see inside the tuatara's nest.

The main narrative is augmented by the addition of discreetly designed panels of extra non-fiction information sprinkled throughout the book. The back matter includes a spread of facts and background information on predators, historical challenges faced by the tuatara and its special significance to Māori. Suitable for both young and old, *TUATARA: A Living Treasure* is the comprehensive story of the unique history, characteristics and challenges faced by this special taonga of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Have them make predictions and inferences and relate these to their own experiences or knowledge. Read the book aloud and, if appropriate, have students read alongside or by themselves. Use all or some of the questions below for discussion, comprehension checks and making connections.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb then turn to the title page.

- Why do you think the tuatara is often called a 'living treasure'? What does this mean?
- What does the word 'ancient' mean?
- Why is the tuatara described as a 'survivor'? Which animals didn't survive?
- Have you ever seen a tuatara in a zoo or wildlife sanctuary? If so, what did you notice about it?

COMPREHENSION:

- What is the author doing in her description of the cliff-bound island? What effect does it have? (p.2)
- What are 'skinks scoot', 'wētā watch' and 'creepy crawlies' examples of? Why do you think the author has used this literary device? (pp.2-3)
- Why has the illustrator paired a close up of the tuatara with the text 'a living treasure'? What effect is created by the sunlight gleaming on the tuatara's skin? (pp.4-5)
- What literary device has the author used in the passage 'nine soft, leathery eggs swell, until they're as tight as the skin of a balloon'? How is this related to the word 'POP!' (pp.6-7)
- What kind of words are 'wiggles', 'jiggles', 'writhing', 'rolling', 'twisting' and 'turning'? How do they relate to hatchlings taking 8-9 hours to reach the surface? (p.8)
- How does the saying 'looks can be deceiving' relate to a tuatara's spines? (p.9)
- What does the word 'evolved' mean? (p.11)
- Why do you think rhynchocephalians may have survived in Aotearoa New Zealand despite dying out everywhere else? (pp.10-12)
- Why are young tuatara active during the day rather than at night, like adult tuatara? (p.14)
- How long can a tuatara survive for in the cold without eating? (p.16)
- Why is the young tuatara relatively safe on the island? (P.17)
- What does the word 'forages' mean? What are some synonyms (words that mean the same)? (p.18)
- What do tuatara eat? (p.19)
- What physical characteristics does a female tuatara look for in a mate? (pp.20-21)
- When do female tuatara lay their eggs? (p.22)
- Why do tuatara lay their eggs in a clearing? (p.22)
- Why do some female tuatara guard their nests? (p.25)
- How often does a female tuatara lay a clutch of eggs? (p.26)
- If the soil around a tuatara nest is cool, are the hatchlings more likely to be male or female? (p.27)
- What does a hatchling tuatara use to break out of its egg? (pp.26-27)
- What were once the only natural predators of tuatara? (p.28)
- What predators arrived with Māori navigators and, later, European settlers? (p.30)
- What do some iwi believe tuatara are? (p.30)
- Where in the world can tuatara be found in the wild? (p.31)
- What is the lifespan of a tuatara? (p.31)



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: BE AN ILLUSTRATOR

Using the illustrations as a guide, draw your own portrait of a tuatara. Use information in the book or your own research to label its body parts.

ACTIVITY 2: BE A REPTILE RESEARCHER

Tuatara are reptiles. Research to find out what reptiles have in common. Choose your favourite reptile and write a report about it, either on paper or using Google Slides.

ACTIVITY 3: MAKE A KAHOOT!

Use information from *TUATARA: A Living Treasure* to make your own Kahoot quizz to try out on your friends and family.

ACTIVITY 4: LEARN MORE ABOUT TAONGA SPECIES

Learn about other native animals that are taonga to Māori. You could research native birds, bats, insects, freshwater or ocean creatures. The choice is yours!

ACTIVITY 5: COMPLETE A WORDFIND

See next page.

Written by Frances McBeath



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

TUATARA

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Can you find these words in the puzzle?

They may be written backwards, forwards, up, down or diagonally.

O	A	A	G	N	I	R	A	E	L	C	U	O	E
H	P	S	P	R	G	B	E	R	P	R	U	T	R
R	R	E	S	N	T	A	R	L	A	O	H	N	D
O	A	N	N	C	U	L	T	H	I	A	T	W	S
T	T	I	S	O	T	P	C	T	T	T	A	T	L
A	L	P	S	B	C	A	L	C	C	I	P	E	A
D	R	S	U	U	P	T	H	T	R	T	S	E	R
E	S	U	A	R	U	R	U	P	L	O	R	R	R
R	A	E	C	R	E	R	E	R	E	E	E	A	I
P	N	P	P	O	K	S	P	Y	N	N	G	N	T
T	R	G	P	W	I	B	R	B	A	A	I	A	G
E	G	G	S	U	P	E	N	T	K	S	L	E	A
O	E	G	E	N	S	A	W	A	G	N	O	A	T
A	R	A	T	A	U	T	R	P	C	C	O	A	O

CLEARING
REPTILE
SPIKE
RAT
EGGS
PREY
NOCTURNAL
PREDATOR
SPINES
TUATARA
HATCH
TAONGA
BURROW

