

TE REO O TE REPO

KEI KONEI TONU AU

THE VOICE OF THE WETLAND
I AM STILL HERE

EDITED BY YVONNE TAURA
CHERI VAN SCHRAVENDIJK-GOODMAN
AND BEVERLEY CLARKSON



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Manaaki Whenua
Landcare Research

Te Reo o Te Repo

Kei konei tonu au

The voice of the wetland – I am still here

2021

Edited by

Yvonne Taura

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Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Uenuku

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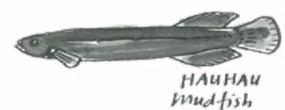
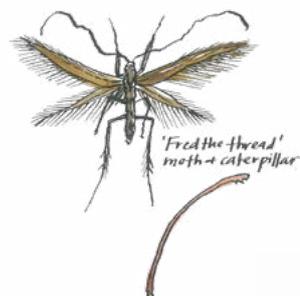
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Te Kawa Robb (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Awa)

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ARTIST APPRECIATION

We were fortunate to have the support of two talented artists who were commissioned to create original artwork and a photographer who gave permission to use his extensive collection of natural world images. We wish to take this moment to acknowledge their contribution to *Te Reo o Te Repo – Kei konei tonu au*.

TE KURA ORMSBY

Ko Taupiri tōku maunga

Ko Waikato tōku awa

Ko Ngāruawāhia tōku tūrangawaewae

Ko Te Kura Ormsby tōku ingoa

Ko ringatoi Māori ahau

Te Kura is a contemporary Māori artist and studied at Toihoukura in Tūrangānui-a-Kiwa (Gisborne) and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in Rāhui Pōkeka (Huntly). She has a passion for colour and loves incorporating colour and patterns in her designs: believing each colour has a whakapapa, she is particular with the colours used for her artwork. Inspired by tā moko after she received her own moko kauae (traditional female facial tattoo), Te Kura was motivated to help revitalise tā moko and moko kauae for her people, by becoming a tā moko artist. She has also been stimulated by *he kōrero tuku iho* of Māori and Polynesian culture, and loves to translate oral history into visual artwork. She is inspired both by traditional art such as whakairo, raranga, kōwhaiwhai, and tā moko uhi and by experimenting with contemporary media such as watercolour – her favourite medium because it effortlessly creates a magical and whimsical look when splashed across a page.

'I believe that art heals people, Indigenous people in particular. Healing for us to tell our stories through art and keep our culture alive, he taonga tuku iho.'

Contact details for Te Kura Ormsby

<https://www.instagram.com/tekuraarts>

Ngā atua wāhine o te repo – Goddess series.

Original artworks for the *Te Reo o Te Repo* cultural wetland series.

Artwork medium – watercolor pencil and ink

Wainui-ātea – The Clear Mighty Waters

As the goddess of inland waters, rivers, and swamps, *Wainui-ātea* is represented in shades of blues, purples, and greens. Her makawe (hair) has been over emphasised with the use of kapua (clouds) to represent her connection to *Rangi* (Sky Father) as his second wife. Her poho (chest) is adorned with intricate patterns to represent her connection to rainwater and inland waters. The ocean waves symbolise an embrace with her son *Te Moana-nui a Kiwa* (Great Ocean of Kiwa), keeping him close to her poho to nurture and care. The moko kauae shows *Wainui-ātea* is a female goddess.



Para-whenua-mea – The Muddy Soil of Mother Earth

As the goddess of muddy soil, *Para-whenua-mea* is represented in shades of browns, oranges, and yellows. *Para-whenua-mea* is referred to as water that emanates from her mother (Deity of the Mountains) as pure spring water. She cascades down the slopes of her mother, falling as a waterfall, then gliding across the surface of the plains (represented by the bold triangles), merging with the streams to form large rivers (represented by the bold lines), while depositing silt along the riverbanks. *Para-whenua-mea* is a powerful, destructive, spirited, and potent force. The moko kauae shows *Para-whenua-mea* is a female goddess.



Hine-i-te-repo – The Elemental Femininity of the Swamp

As the goddess of the swamp, *Hine-i-te-repo* is represented in shades of greens and browns. The main focus is her kanohi (face) because when the artist thinks of a swamp she thinks of a taniwha (water spirit), with big eyes looking back from a dark boggy environment. Along her eyelashes and eyebrows are hints of different wetland plants, such as reeds, toetoe and raupō. Throughout the image are patterns and symbols (triangles, lines and arrows, and dots) that represent the flora and fauna of the swamp. The moko kauae shows *Hine-i-te-repo* is a female goddess.



MONICA PETERS

(people+science)

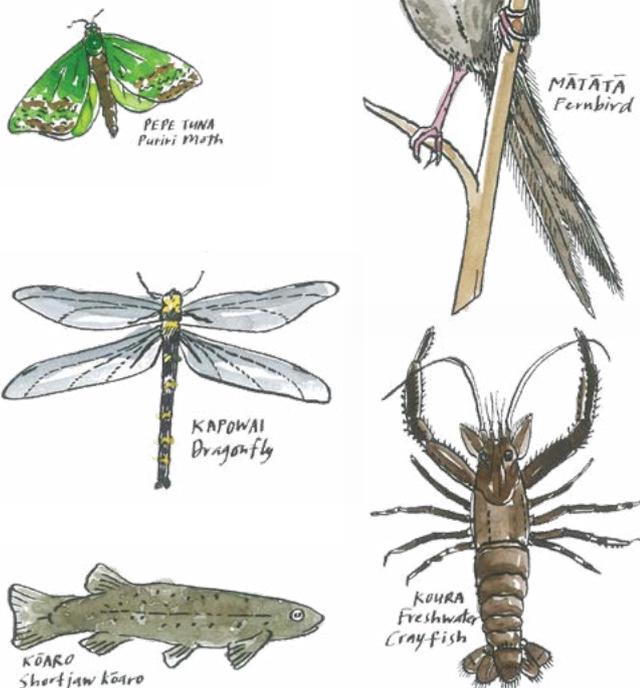
Monica is a consultant working at the interface between science, conservation, and the public. Her day jobs mostly span research, science communication, and governance with illustration as an occasional creative outlet. She has always seen art and science as complimentary. While studying fine arts, Monica also worked in conservation, later gaining a PhD in community-led environmental restoration and citizen science. She is fascinated by plants and drawing is the best way to explore and understand their structure. Over the last two decades, Monica's conservation work has taken her to many different wetlands, from nearly pristine to completely degraded. Her hand-drawn diagrams help others gain insights into the beauty of these complex, intriguing, and underappreciated ecosystems. As visual cues, they are one small piece in the information puzzle to help guide the long journey toward wetland restoration.

Contact details for Monica Peters

<https://monicalogues.com>

Te Repo o Aotearoa – wetland habitats, and native flora and fauna. Original artworks for the *Te Reo o Te Repo* cultural wetland series.

Artwork medium – watercolor paints and ink



NEIL FITZGERALD

© Neil Fitzgerald Photography

Neil is a part-time nature photographer with a particular interest in the wildlife and landscape of Aotearoa. While birds are a permanent interest and a large feature in his photo collection, he also enjoys photographing the smaller, often overlooked wildlife, like insects, or fine details in a vast landscape, hoping to show them in a way that encourages people to pause and appreciate them a little more. He believes the best photographs often come from having a deep understanding of the subject, but also that photography itself can be a powerful learning tool. From cryptic birds to plants that eat animals, reflections of snow-capped mountains in a tarn to a flower in the lens formed by a drop of water, Neil finds endless photographic opportunities and challenges in wetlands.

Contact details for Neil Fitzgerald

<https://www.neilfitzgeraldphoto.co.nz>



Pāpango (NZ Scaup; *Aythya novaeseelandiae*).
Photo: © Neil Fitzgerald



A red percher dragonfly (*Diplacodes bipunctata*) covered in heavy dew, at Lake Ohia gumland, Northland. Photo: © Neil Fitzgerald

FOREWORD

*E kore tātau e mōhio ki te waitohu nui
o te wai kia mimiti rawa te puna*

We never know the worth of water until the well runs dry

Te Wharehuia Milroy (Ngāi Tūhoe)

He mihi tautoko

E ngā mana, e ngā waka, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha o ngā hau e whā, tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa. Papatūānuku e takoto mai nei, te whenua, te taiao, ngā taonga repo, whangaia kia tupu kia pūāwai, he taonga tuku iho, tihei mauri ora!!

It gives me great delight to introduce *Te Reo o Te Repo – Kei konei tonu au*. The second volume of the *Te Reo o Te Repo* cultural wetland handbook series provides a range of examples of Indigenous Māori values, knowledge, and perspectives, from across Aotearoa New Zealand, illustrating the diversity of these precious wetland ecosystems and their characteristic properties, life forms, and inter-connections. This handbook is the culmination of much effort, bringing together many individuals and organisations to share their ngākau whiwhita (passion), tikanga and mātauranga Māori (cultural values and knowledge), wheako (experiences), whakaaro (thoughts and ideas), and tūhononga ki te repo (connection to wetlands) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). It includes chapters from whānau (families), hapū (sub-tribes), iwi (tribes), tangata whenua and mana whenua (people of the land), local kaitiaki (guardians), and kairangahau (scientists and researchers), drawing on a wide range of knowledge and experience from different tribal regions (rohe) around Aotearoa.

The editors have successfully woven these diverse values, knowledge, and perspectives through a rich whāriki (tapestry) of 16 new chapters ranging from whānau, marae, hapū, and iwi-led restoration projects and practical demonstrations, to academic research, including: whakapapa (ancestral connections) and whakataukī Māori (proverbs); rongoā Māori (traditional medicine); iwi-led dune lakes restoration; iwi-led wetland restoration and monitoring; Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping; and cultural indicators – taonga plant and animal species (culturally important) provide underpinning of cultural resources

and mātauranga Māori based tools and approaches. This new addition to the wetland handbook series provides a helpful guide for those embarking on wetland restoration as well as highlighting the importance of mātauranga Māori and whānau, hapū, and iwi involvement in these processes. Based on experiences from knowledgeable practitioners and contributors, the handbook explains the cultural significance of repo that can help define whakaarotau (priorities) for repo restoration.

Wetlands are: '*permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water, and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions (RMA)*' and are manifest as a variety of forms such as lakes, rivers, streams, dune lands, estuaries, swamps, bogs, marshes. For iwi Māori, repo are much more than this and reflect a deep history and kōrero (set of narratives) of whakapapa stories (pūrakau), beliefs, origins, dependencies, uses, and activities that are an essential and integral part of the cultural landscape (whenua, Papatūānuku) and te ira tangata (the human dimension). The mauri (life force, vitality, essence) of repo is linked to the overall concept of ecological health and human well-being and prosperity. The continuation and strengthening of whakapapa between the ecosystem and tangata whenua is an important demonstration of this continued existence, connection, and interdependency that helps sustain the mauri. Whakapapa can be explained through generations, layers, and interconnections through many important kupu (words) and korero i te reo Māori (language). As illustrated in this handbook, repo are reservoirs for mātauranga, hauora (health and wellness), and utilisation and are regarded by Māori as taonga (treasure) with historical, social, environmental, cultural, economic, and spiritual significance. Although more than 90% of repo throughout Aotearoa have already been destroyed, many rōpū (groups) are now



committed to restoring and enhancing these valuable ecosystems. In these circumstances it is important to think not only about wetland extent (the total area) but also about the condition and quality of repo (e.g. te mauri) that sustains life-supporting capacity, and how te mauri o te repo might be replenished, sustained, and enhanced.

In Māori, many names and classifications are used for repo, for example, repo, reporepo, kōrepo, wairepo, tāpokopoko, poharu, and roto. These have been handed down through centuries from tūpuna (ancestors) and knowledgeable experts (e.g. tohunga, mātanga). Repo are typically wet areas (e.g. wāhi māku, haumāku) important as part of an overall land-system that regulates and accommodates water levels and flooding. Repo contain significant habitats for a large number of taonga species – plants, animals, fish, birds, reptiles, insects, and micro-organisms. As a significant taonga in itself, repo support high levels of intrinsic, cultural, and spiritual value, sustaining biodiversity and a diverse range of customary resources, including mahinga kai (food gathering sites), significant spawning grounds for fish, a nursery for plants and birds, a pātaka (storehouse) for materials such as raranga (weaving), rongoā (Māori medicinal use), kai (food), and construction of whare (houses). They also support many important customary activities and uses that include waka ama (canoe regatta) and kaukau (swim, bathe). Wetlands are often personified as ngā whatukuhu o Papatūānuku – the kidneys of the earth, acting like giant sponges or filters across the whenua (land). They have the ability to cleanse the water of excess nutrients and sediment, control flood water and pollutants, and act as important carbon sinks and reservoirs (removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere). Reflecting a range of integral values repo sustain life, support well-being, and reinforce cultural identity.

Repo are therefore integral parts of the landscape critical to the efficient functioning of our whenua and the healing and sustenance of Papatūānuku (Earth Mother). It is vital to restore, sustain, and enhance the mauri of such systems, including all aspects of the ecosystem from the water, the nutrients, the plants and animals, and the intricate interconnecting and interdependent parts and webs. Ecosystem benefits (services) from repo are wide ranging (e.g. customary resources, water regulation and filtering, recycling nutrients, biodiversity, carbon sequestration, climate regulation, plants, fish and birds, reservoirs). Our aspirations in this landscape must be to return repo as a taonga to an acceptable state in line with our values and knowledge systems. We cannot turn back time, but we can achieve our aspirations by learning through deep knowledge sources from the past and present, such as those highlighted by this handbook. These sources are based on the teachings of our tūpuna, from the experiences and practices we lead, and from the actions we take to restore and sustain the whenua. As human beings we must empower, strategize, and put into place a set of actions that improves the environment for future generations. **There is no more important lesson than the power of collaboration when we agree to work together for a common purpose or goal – especially one that benefits our whenua and Earth Mother Papatūānuku.**

Whāia e koe te iti kahurangi, ki te tūohu koe, me he maunga teitei

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garth Harmsworth'.

Garth Harmsworth (Te Arawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi, Ngāti Raukawa)

Toi Rangahau Māori, Principal Scientist
Manaaki Whenua

Ka mea ake te repo:

'Me he manawa whenua, e kore taku reo e ngaro!

Kei konei tonu au. Kei konei tonu tātou.'

The wetland replied:

'My voice will never be lost, like a spring, it bursts forth from the land!

I am still here. We are all still here.'

