



Experiencing Marine Reserves - EMR - Te Kura Moana

Programme Specific Strategy 2022 - 2025

Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) is a national programme of experiential learning about marine conservation. Our EMR - Te Kura Moana programme empowers schools and communities by providing hands-on experience in the ocean. Delivered by an EMR coordinator the programme is designed to set the kids abuzz before progressing to developing their snorkeling skills in a pool then heading to the real marine environment. We increase awareness and encourage action and support for marine conservation.

The EMR brand is unique; we have an active focus on community engagement and marine conservation. We are committed to delivering safe snorkel excursions and we are adventure activity safety audit certified (AAO 534). The national expansion of EMR is based on a non-profit franchise concept.

Titiro ki te moana - EMR will take you down under!

Our full EMR programme involves a succession of experiences promoting kaitiakitanga from investigating marine biodiversity and the local marine environment before venturing to a marine protected area. After this experience, students are able to compare unprotected and protected areas and are encouraged to put their knowledge into action within the community!

We create awesome real life marine experiences, not just for kids but adults too. Engagement of adults as supervisors is a natural by-product and in-water experiences and activities often prove as powerful to the adults involved as the students, these shape caring attitudes and emotional connections. We have a range of funded programmes and 'casual' user pays opportunities, these are our Te Kura Moana snorkel experiences. EMR reinforces simple concepts such as the uniqueness of our marine biodiversity and provides an active focus on conservation of these environments through education and action.

"We work with hearts and minds. These are the building blocks for people to create emotional connections with their environment." - Samara Nicholas





Our EMR kaitiaki action projects create long term impacts for the protection of our marine environment for future generations. Over the years hundreds of action projects have resulted in positive changes for Aotearoa's marine environment, including marine monitoring, dune restoration, riparian restoration, public awareness raising for marine conservation and marine pest detection!

The name Experiencing Marine Reserves is associated with the kaupapa of 'no-take' and implies the association with not collecting/non disturbance, just a looking and learning focus. All school and group field trips are no-take (no matter where we are!), unless cultural or scientific aspects to the kaupapa on the day.

A 'no- take' kaupapa also creates a safer snorkel experience, adopting the concept of manaakitanga and promoting the water safety code. Over the years snorkeling in marine reserve's has provided the most inspiration (I saw a massive snapper!). We see marine reserves as rich educational tools and often refer to them as 'wet libraries'. Marine Reserves provide sanctuary for fish and other marine life, to live and breed. They provide a natural benchmark against which to measure the state of other areas, where our kids can actually see and enjoy the natural variety, sizes and abundance of fish, seaweeds and invertebrates in a fully functioning ecosystem.

We also snorkel at a variety of other marine habitats and marine protected areas, such as rahui, mataitai and Taipure. EMR supports all forms of marine protection that enhance marine biodiversity for future generations.

Our reach is not limited to school programmes, throughout the summer we offer a range of community engagement events such as snorkel days, throughout the motu. Our programmes and events provide a constant groundswell of community participation. We developed rangatahi training events to fill a void in volunteer snorkel guides for the youth age group. Through this process we also realised the potential for a more in-depth training and a type of mentorship opportunity to support the development of Māori youth and possible new career pathways. We also offer taitamariki/rangatahi, who have an affinity for the moana to engage in our 'Marine Mahi for Rangatahi' kaupapa through mentorship and volunteer development, focusing on marine pest detection, marine biodiversity monitoring, snorkel guiding, marine reserve/ rāhui surveillance, marine education and supporting a career pathway. All have become water safety and conservation influencers.

EMR is now located in 8 different regions throughout New Zealand with a passionate team of 25 coordinators and EMR has been adopted in South Australia. Every year EMR runs a national competition for the chance to snorkel at the Poor Knights Island Marine Reserve. Representatives are selected based on the merits of an action project or ocean art where they demonstrate kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and action projects that address marine issues in their community.





Since 2001, EMR has taken 73,180 people into NZ's marine reserves/rahui and over 27,291 people have been engaged in EMR organised marine conservation events. A total of 147,905 people have snorkeled with EMR. The total number of Kiwis engaged in EMR has now reached 207,494.

EMR is an Award-winning Brand

In 2015 Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust was recognised by the Tindall Foundation for making an outstanding contribution to New Zealand with a special award presented by the then Governor General Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae at Government House. In 2020, Samara Nicholas and the Experiencing Marine Reserves - EMR team won the Dive New Zealand magazine Recognition Wyland Award. In 2021, EMR won the Northland Regional Council Whakamānawa ā Taiao award for environmental action in the community and Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust - EMR was the overall winner of Te Tohu Matua Supreme Award <https://youtu.be/41O USSzWSZY>

A National Programme of Experiential Learning about Marine Conservation

Aim

To engage as many people as possible in meaningful experiences in the marine environment.

Objectives

To provide safe and supervised snorkeling that enables participants to experience the marine environment first-hand.

- Build water safety and confidence in the real environment.
- Inspire positive attitudes and actions for protecting our marine environment.
- Empower and support local aspirations for marine conservation and kaitiakitanga
- Support and facilitate projects that result in awareness and/or action to address marine issues.
- Rangatahi engagement at our marine conservation events.
- Grow marine mahi for rangatahi project.





- In-water experiences become lifelong memories.
- Inspiration for restoration of marine ecosystems.
- Community participants go on to become valued volunteer snorkel guides.
- Restoration of marine ecosystems by supporting iwi/hapu and communities to implement marine protection.
- Provide community engagement events that assist with management of marine protected areas.
- Bring together western science and mātauranga Māori concepts for delivery.
- Deliver snorkel experiences in 'Reo Rua'.
- Create community pride and ownership of existing marine reserves and new marine protected areas.
- Support and grow rangatahi/taitamariki/youth mentorship, building on training and cadetship opportunities.
- Communicate science and understanding about marine conservation into the wider communities where EMR operates.
- Increase support for new or proposed marine protected areas.
- Motivate action projects that enhance the marine environment.
- Inspire community led action.

Core Values in all Areas of our Operation

- Mana whenua/moana are communicated with from the outset in each rohe we work in.
- Our approach is one of open consultation, authenticity, co-creation and collaboration.
- Ensure our programme delivery follows tikanga and can be delivered authentically and incorporate Mātauranga Māori and Te Ao Māori.
- EMR Kaupapa - Look and learn at all times (except cultural or scientific events)
- Foster local community involvement whenever possible.
- Teaching and activities retain a NZ focus.
- All snorkelling in accordance with EMR SOP, MTSCT SMP and adventure activity safety audit standard (certification AAO 534).
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EMR National Strategy

- Support initiatives from the community to restore and protect our marine environment.
- Initiate action projects (coordinator or school/group led) to restore and protect marine environment.
- Wherever possible work with our sister WBC for a Mountains to Sea focus.
- Communicate marine science.
- Promote the work of the late and great - Bill Ballantine and Roger Grace.

National Expansion Goals

- Enhance national EMR brand - cohost events, EMR mentioned in all regional communications.
- Increase community participation in events - regions grow events.





Ensure provider organisations feel supported.

EMR KPI's

- Initially - maintain delivery to pre-COVID levels.
- Snorkeling participation increases each year.
- Demonstrated increase in knowledge of marine biodiversity and marine conservation.
- Community engagement events increase each year.
- Volunteer base grows each year.
- Social media following grows each year.
- Demonstrated increase in feeling of connection to the marine environment.
- Action projects are reported.
- Positive attitudes towards kaitiakitanga or caring for the marine environment increased through participation.
- Action undertaken that directly relates to improvement of the environment (such as a planting day or marine monitoring project).

We have an active focus on the restoration of marine ecosystems and together with the Whitebait Connection (WBC), the restoration of catchments, from the Mountains to the Sea.

Water connects all life on Earth. It is the physical and spiritual bond between humans and nature. Likewise, the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust connects our freshwater (WBC) and marine (EMR) programmes with iwi, communities and people, webbed into one network for the lasting wellbeing of people and the planet.



www.emr.org.nz

www.whitebaitconnection.co.nz

www.mountaintosea.org.nz

