

Panguru Area School Field Trip to the Whakarapa Stream

February 19, 2013

The Whakarapa Stream is a lovely clear, stony-bottom stream that starts in the Warawara Forest and empties into the Hokianga Harbour near the school at Panguru. Throughout its length the stream is shaded by the tall trees of the forest and when it passes through a short stretch of farmland its banks still have plenty of over-hanging trees, shrubs and grasses that keep it cool. Even on the hot February day of the field trip, the water temperature was a pleasant 14.5 degrees Celsius and the clarity test showed more than 70cm, which is really good clear water.



All of the traps that had been set the night before had fish in them: mostly Inanga and also some red-fin bullies and common bully fish. The children proved to be very good at netting

eels (one was 20cm long) and more bullies as well as a range of invertebrates. They were excited to find so much life in their awa and proud to discover that this means the waterway is healthy.

Here are some of the critters they found:



Inanga



Tuna



Dobsonfly larva (toe-biter)



Free-living caddisfly larva



Bully fish

The students now have a renewed sense of what it means to be kaitiaki of this beautiful environment as they appreciate how all the critters are inter-dependent. Panguru is a special place where the mountains and the sea are very close, pretty much the front and back doorstep of the township and school! Besides sharing their findings with their community via the school newsletter, some of the classes are following up their freshwater studies with investigation of wetland environments, starting with the nearby mangrove estuary.