

# Connecting with nature at home

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS TO CELEBRATE CONSERVATION WEEK AT HOME

Take a moment to  
*whakaruaia*  
*te taiao*  
celebrate nature  
This event is part of  
Conservation Week 2021





# 1. Get creative

Create a piece of art (draw, paint, collage, etc) inspired by what you like about the Sanctuary- anything at all!

**Simply send us a photo of your completed masterpiece to be in to win a family pass to the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary!**

We will select two winners- one from ages 2-6 and one from ages 7-13

**Email your submission to [educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz) or by post to our town office by the 17th of September.**

Postal address:

*The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary Town Office*

*PO Box 744*

*Nelson 7010*

Make sure to add your name, age, phone number, and a brief description of your Sanctuary-inspired creation.

Keep an eye out for the announcement of the winners on our website and social media.

Happy creating!

# 2. Keep a nature journal

A nature journal is a great tool to help you record your discoveries and tune in to the sights and sounds of nature around you.

- Keep a nature journal (try to keep it for at least a week) where you will record three good things you notice in nature.
- This could be in your garden, while you are out walking, or even just outside your bedroom window. You can notice the sights, sounds, and smells of things like birds, flowers, and leaves.
- Record what you notice by writing it down, taking a photo, drawing a picture, or even a video diary.
- At the end of the week share your findings with friends and family.

**We would also love to see your observations and discoveries.**

**Send photos or a video of your nature journal to [educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz) by the 17th of September and will send you a free pass into the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary!**

*Tip: You can get help from scientists and fellow nature observers to identify the plants and animals in your photos by uploading them to [iNaturalist](#) and/or [NZ Bird Atlas](#).*

# 3. Make a bird mask

Become a bird (or a wētā) for a day!

DOC has designed these great bird and wētā face mask templates that you can print off, colour in, and cut out. You will need sticky tape or a stapler to attach the headband to your face mask (get someone to help measure around your head).

For the templates follow this link:

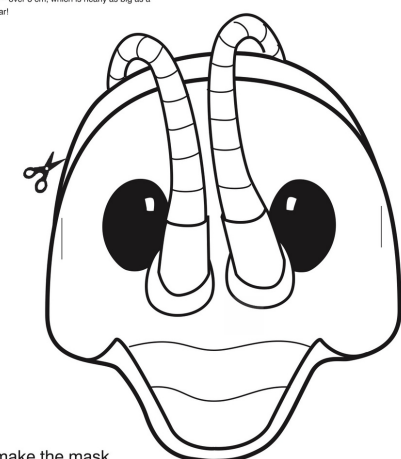
**<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/conservation-activities/fun-things-to-make/>**

We would love to see the masks you create!

Email photos of you wearing your mask or even videos of you practicing your bird song to **[educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz)**

## Wētā

Wētā are incredible looking creatures. With their big bodies, spiny legs, and curved tails, they are one of New Zealand's most recognizable creepy crawlies. Wētā are nocturnal, which means they come out at night. There are different kinds. The wētā ground wētā, cave wētā, giant wētā and tree wētā of banded wētā. Some live in forests or caves, some dig holes under stones, in rotten logs or burrow in trees. The wētā of Lake Barrier Island is the biggest – over 10 cm, which is nearly as big as a man's leg!



To make the mask  
Colour in the wētā.  
Cut out the head and head band along outlines.  
Cut out two eyes.  
Staple or sellotape the head strap to fit.

cut a head band

www.doc.govt.nz  
Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Māori  
Wētā



## 4. Have a scavenger hunt

Find treasure in your garden! See how many things you can find from this chart- use a kete/ basket to store your treasure.

We would love to see photos of you on your scavenger hunt and what you find.

Send photos through to:

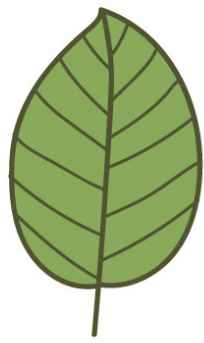
[educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz](mailto:educationsupport@brooksanctuary.org.nz)

For more scavenger hunt ideas check out DOC's website (they even have one for the rocky shore):

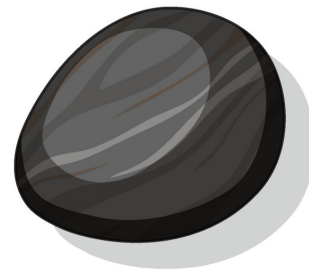
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/conservation-activities/scavenger-hunts/>

### Can you collect:

3 native leaves and try to identify them



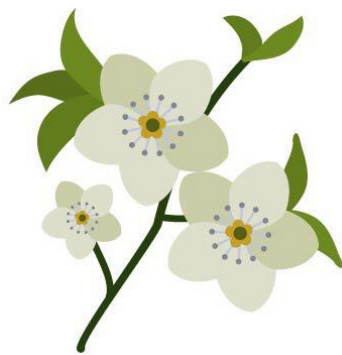
3 rocks that look like different animals



A feather and try to identify the bird



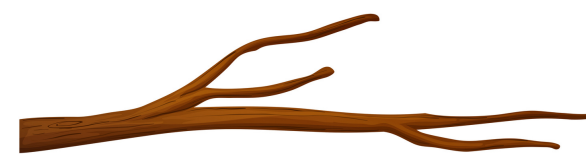
3 different flowers



Something yellow

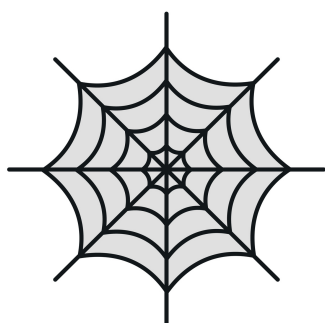


An interestingly shaped stick



### Can you spot:

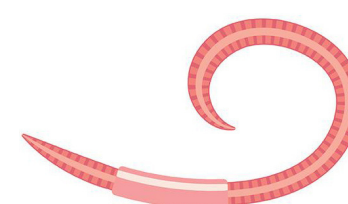
A spider's web



A native New Zealand bird



An earthworm



#### And for even more ideas:

- Can you find a Kawakawa plant? It has a recognisable heart-shaped leaf and a very distinctive smell. Kawakawa is used in traditional Māori medicine as it is known to have many healing properties. You can also make a delicious tea with kawakawa and honey- but do make sure you have an adult help out
- You can paint the animal-shaped rocks that you found in the scavenger hunt
- Find the tallest, native tree in your neighbourhood. We have two very tall trees inside the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, they are called the twins and are a Matai and a Rimu.





## 5. Make your own birdfeeder

There are so many great homemade bird feeder ideas online. Check out this website:

<https://happyhooligans.ca/32-homemade-bird-feeders/>

Here is a super easy idea that only requires 1 toilet paper roll, 1 jar of peanut butter, and birdseed:

<https://playfromscratch.tumblr.com/post/55626772797/summer-project-ideas>

## 6. Build a wētā motel

Wētā have been around since the time of the dinosaurs and can only be found in Aotearoa. There are more than 70 species but many are now endangered, so it is very important that we look after them! A great way to do this is by building a wētā motel that protects them from being eaten by predators like stoats, cats, rats, and hedgehogs.

Explore your garden to see if you have any wētā living there already.

Here is a great resource created DOC, but also visit their website for more in-depth instructions:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/toyota-kiwi-guardians/take-action/build-a-weta-motel/>

### BUILD A WĒTĀ MOTEL



New Zealand has more than 70 species of wētā, from small ground wētā to wētā that can be heavier than a mouse! Wētā have been around since the time of the dinosaurs and only exist in New Zealand. Many wētā species are now endangered, so it's very important we look after them. A wētā motel will help protect them from being eaten by introduced predators like rats, stoats, cats and hedgehogs.

#### YOU WILL NEED

- Small log
- Saw, chisel and drill
- Nails and hammer
- Material for motel roof (plastic or iron)
- String or wire to hang up your motel
- An adult to give you a hand

#### GET BUILDING

Saw a small log in half. Chisel out some rooms for the wētā and drill an entrance tunnel. A tunnel 18mm or slightly smaller is best to stop mice getting in (10 mm is too small!). The tunnel should be quite long and sloping down from the top or the side. Nail the two halves of the log together and then nail on a roof. Hang or tie the motel in a tree in a shady spot at about eye level, out of reach of rats or mice. Want a 5-star upgrade for your wētā, or some handy hints on making your motel? Go to [www.kiwiguardians.co.nz](http://www.kiwiguardians.co.nz)

#### BE PATIENT

In a forest wētā move into purpose-built motels within about three months. After a year there are usually about four wētā in each motel.

Tell us about your wētā motel and we'll send you a Toyota Kiwi Guardians Habitat Creator medal.

**REMEMBER TO CLAIM YOUR ACTION MEDAL  
AT [KIWIGUARDIANS.CO.NZ](http://KIWIGUARDIANS.CO.NZ)**





# 7. Conduct a scientific experiment

Let's get our hands dirty and observe different types of soil.

Soil is composed of four ingredients:

**minerals particles (clay, silt, and sand), organic matter, water, and air**

The combination of these ingredients determines the soil's properties:

**texture, structure, porosity, chemistry, and colour**

Visit the Science Learning Hub for more information on soil properties:

**<https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/re-sources/957-soil-properties>**

Let's see for ourselves what different compositions of soil look like...

## For this activity you will need:

- Empty jars (larger jars are better)
  - Permanent marker
  - Gardel trowel
  - Water
1. Visit a number of different locations close to your home- your back garden (avoid vege garden), riverbank, the bush, etc
  2. Use the garden trowel to dig up soil- keep the hole small but deep so you can get both topsoil and the soil from below
  3. Fill the jars with soil to about halfway
  4. Record the location on the lid of the jar
  5. Fill the rest of the jar with water, shake it and then leave the soil to settle
  6. Once settled, observe the contents of the different jars and record your findings

## Consider:

- Are there different layers in the soil?
- Are the layers different colours?
- Are some of the layers lighter or darker than the others?
- Often, heavy sand particles settle on the bottom, then a layer of silt, a layer of clay, and organic matter will form as a layer or float on top of the water
- Can you explain why they are different? Different properties? (For example, soil found along rivers contain more sand)



# Thanks to

- The Department of Conservation (DOC) for their great activity ideas and resources
- Vecteezy.com for vector images

Leaf: [Leaf](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/leaf) Vectors by Vecteezy

Stone: [Stone](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/stone) Vectors by Vecteezy

Feather: [Silhouette](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/silhouette) Vectors by Vecteezy

White flower: [Flowers](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/flowers) Vectors by Vecteezy

Yellow flower: [Daffodil](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/daffodil) Vectors by Vecteezy

Stick: [Branch](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/branch) Vectors by Vecteezy

Spiderweb: [Spiderweb](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/spiderweb) Vectors by Vecteezy

Fantail: [Bird](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/bird) Vectors by Vecteezy

Earthworm: [Worm](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/worm) Vectors by Vecteezy

- Science Learning Hub
- happyhooligans.ca
- playfromscratch.tumblr.com
- iNaturalist
- NZ Bird Atlas