

# Trend Task: Tuatara and Weta

Approach: Station  
 Focus: Comprehension; analysing and interpreting  
 Resources: Tuatara model and card, Weta model and card

Year: 4 & 8

## Questions / instructions:

Use the information cards to answer the questions.

**TUATARA**  
 The living fossil

The Tuatara lives on a few offshore islands around New Zealand.

The Tuatara is a survivor from the dinosaur age. Its ancestors stretch back 225 million years.

It is not a lizard. Instead it is called a living fossil.

It has teeth and powerful jaws and feeds on insects, snails, lizards and even small sea birds.

The word 'Tuatara' comes from the Māori language and means spiny-back.



**GIANT WETA**

The Giant Weta is a large, brown, flightless grasshopper.

It is one of the few protected insects and now mainly lives on New Zealand's offshore islands where it is safe from predators.

Giant Wetas can grow over 50mm long and weigh as much as 25 grams.

Although fearsome looking, it is actually quite tame and its diet is largely vegetarian (plant life).

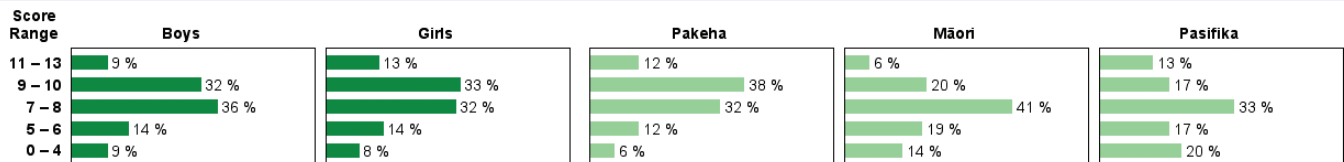
It leads a lonely, nocturnal (night) life, spending the day hidden in plants or under stones.



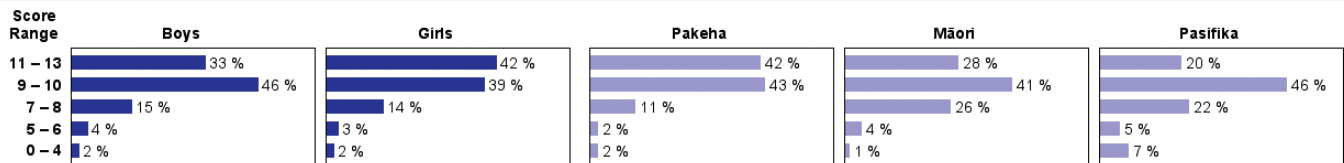
Question	Answer	% response 2008 ('04)		Question	Answer	% response 2008 ('04)		
		year 4	year 8			year 4	year 8	
1. Name <b>three</b> things a Tuatara feeds on. [insects, snails, lizards, small sea birds or sea birds]	3 or 4 valid answers	89 (89)	97 (93)	5. What is the <b>same</b> about where the creatures live?	<b>Mentioned:</b> – offshore islands or offshore; – New Zealand	both places offshore islands only New Zealand only	21 (21)	43 (37)
	2 valid answers	3 (5)	0 (3)				23 (20)	27 (30)
	1 valid answer	2 (1)	0 (1)				21 (20)	14 (12)
2. What does the word 'tuatara' mean in Māori?	spiny-back (both words needed, misspelling is okay)	87 (89)	95 (94)	6. What is <b>different</b> about what the creatures eat?	<b>Mentioned:</b> [Tuatara is a carnivore (eats animals/meat) AND Weta is a herbivore (eats plants)]	difference is captured (both creatures mentioned)	43 (48)	72 (74)
3. What size can Giant Wetas grow to?	<b>Length:</b> (over) 50 mm	87 (85)	96 (92)	<b>Total score:</b>	11–13	9–10	11 (9)	37 (39)
	50 (without units)	0 (3)	0 (0)				32 (35)	43 (40)
	<b>Mass:</b> 25g	13 (10)	25 (27)				7–8	34 (31)
4. When does the Giant Weta mainly move about?	25 (without units)	0 (1)	0 (0)	5–6	14 (17)	3 (8)		
	at night/in the dark	47 (41)	68 (56)	0–4	9 (8)	2 (2)		
	nocturnal	5 (8)	8 (16)					

## Subgroup Analyses:

### Year 4



### Year 8



## Commentary:

Forty-three percent of year 4 students and 80% of year 8 students scored well (nine or more) on this task. More students directly extracted information correctly from the individual passages than identified similarities or differences from the two passages. Performance was very similar in 2004 and 2008.