

**“Empowering Māori business
and communities with the
latest scientific knowledge and
tools – that’s our kaupapa”**

Dr Charlotte Severne
Chief Scientist – Māori

Te Kūwaha o Taihoro Nukurangi – desired outcome

The innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources, and people is unlocked to assist New Zealanders to create a better future. Kia tū Rangatira ai te ao Māori – Māori aspirations are pursued in partnership with others

Sharing knowledge with Māori communities

E ngā hau e tāwhio ana huri noa i te motu, tēnei te mihi maioha o Te Kūwaha ki a koutou ngā iwi e ngākaunui ana ki ngā āhuatanga o tō tātou nei taiao. Ko mātou nei te roopu rangahau Māori o roto o NIWA e mahi ngatahi ana i te taha o ō mātou hoa kaupakihi Māori. Ānei rā ētehi o ngā mahi rangahau e whakahaere ana i tō mātou nei roopu i tēnei tau, nō reira tēnā rā koutou katoa.

Te Kūwaha, NIWA's Māori environmental research group, assists Māori communities throughout New Zealand in their management of natural resources, identifying research needs and empowering them with the latest scientific knowledge and tools. In the past year, Te Kūwaha has engaged with Māori communities on a wide range of issues – from simple techniques for testing water quality, to developing commercial aquaculture operations, to managing customary fisheries.

Tuna (native freshwater eels) are a taonga species and support important customary fisheries. Declines in populations of endemic longfin eels are causing great concern. As New Zealand's leading provider of western scientific research and advice on tuna, NIWA is engaging with Māori communities seeking to actively monitor and manage tuna stocks.

In the past year, Te Kūwaha and NIWA tuna scientists have shared their knowledge in workshops with three Māori communities: Te Rūnanga Ā Iwi O Ngāpuhi (Tai Tokerau, Northland), the Lake Waikaremoana Hapū Restoration Trust, and Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Hine (Tai Tokerau, Northland).

The tailor-made workshops and accompanying manuals presented the latest information on tuna biology and status of stocks in each region. "This helped to dispel some common misconceptions about tuna life cycles that affect the way they're managed," says Te Kūwaha scientist Erica Williams.

"For instance, we explained that it's important to leave the bigger eels, which are the breeding females, and that all tuna go to sea to breed," says Dr Williams.

Practical discussions and demonstrations covered aspects of designing eel population studies, including selecting study sites, and how to catch, identify, sex, and age tuna. These workshops will inform future community-led research on tuna and the development of tuna management plans, and will help define directions for future tuna research at NIWA.

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Members of Wairewa rūnanga processing tuna caught using customary means in Wairewa (Lake Forsyth).