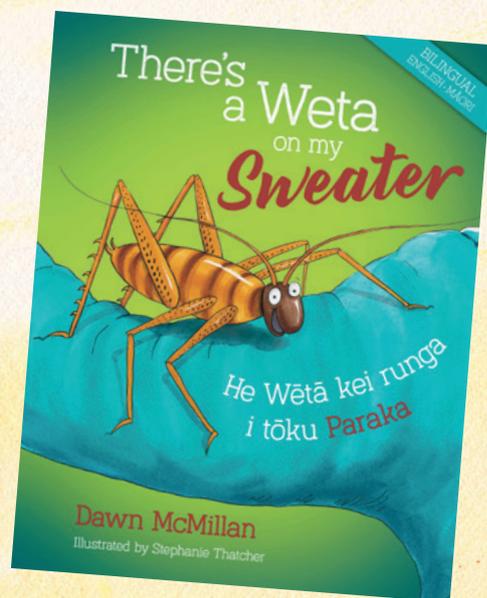


There's a Weta on my Sweater

Dawn McMillan

Illustrated by Stephanie Thatcher

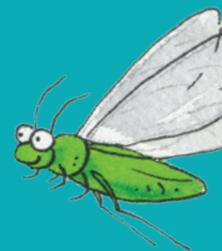


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Teacher Resource

Weta and his many friends want to go to school! But with a classroom of excited kids and a terrified teacher is it such a good idea? Grandad comes to the rescue and the creatures escape to their own homes. Does Granddad know where Weta lives?

A fun story about commonly found small creatures of New Zealand, with some fascinating information about each creature at the back of the book, and a feature page about New Zealand weta.



PUT ON YOUR THINKING HATS!



What were your first thoughts when you saw the picture of the weta on the boy's shoulder? What did you think might happen? Have you ever found a weta in a strange place?



Make a judgement about all the creatures coming into a classroom. Was it wise for them to go there? They seemed to be having such fun and then ... Why didn't they want to stay?



The author and the illustrator loved doing this book. Why do you think they were so happy in their work? If you were the author or the illustrator would you make any changes? What is your favourite page, and why?



Explore the Bits and Bugs pages. Count the facts. Can you add more facts for each creature? Your opinion please — is the story fact or fiction?



Develop a plan for keeping a small creature safe in the classroom, and for returning it to an appropriate home. (To look after your chosen creature you will need to learn about its behaviours and its habitat. Use the computer to search for information. Visit the library, or talk to knowledgeable people.)



The author has left it to our imagination as to how the other creatures get home. How do you think they make their way home?

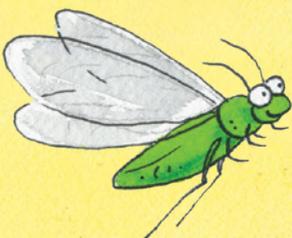
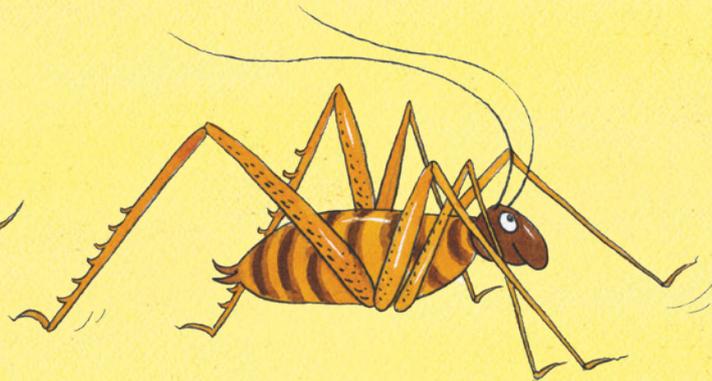
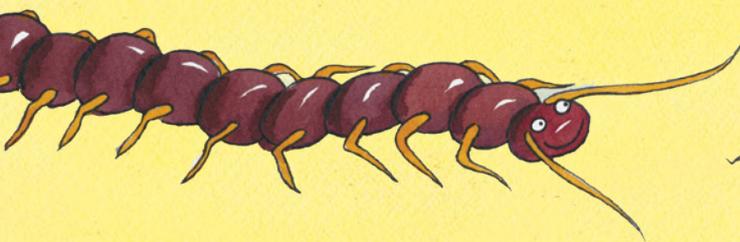




FULL S-T-E-A-M AHEAD!

Some fun activities for Science, Technology,
Engineering, Arts and Math

- Invite a speaker to your classroom to share their knowledge of any small creature of New Zealand.
- Build a weta house for the school garden, or for your garden at home. Be sure your design is weta friendly. Research this site to help with your design: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/toyota-kiwi-guardians/take-action/build-a-weta-motel/>
- Make a list of WOW! words about the weta. Create a poster asking people to look after our amazing weta. Use your WOW! words on your poster.
- Have some beetle fun: <https://artprojectsforkids.org/how-to-draw-a-beetle> Or plan and design your own art project for any creature in the book.
- Practise your te Reo Māori and read aloud to each other. When you feel confident try recording your reading. Listen back to be proud of your te Reo skills.
- Have fun drawing to scale with a grid. Select one of the weta from the Bits and Bugs pages. Find out the measurements of your weta and draw it to size on small grid paper. Enlarge your weta by drawing it again on a grid with larger squares. Keep using bigger squares until you have a large weta drawing for a wall display. Try having a diagonal line in each of your squares. See how it improves your drawing.
- Using your scale drawing, build a model weta from paper-mache or modelling dough. Remember to label your drawings and models in te Reo and English.



WRITE TO US

Stephanie says, 'I would love to receive a parcel of your drawings!' Dawn says, 'My mum was on the way to milk the cows when she felt a weta inside her overalls. I'd love you to write a story about that, and what might have happened. Use your imagination. Send it to me please!' You can send your letters to Stephanie and Dawn at 783 West Coast Road, Oratia, Auckland 0604.

Bits and bugs



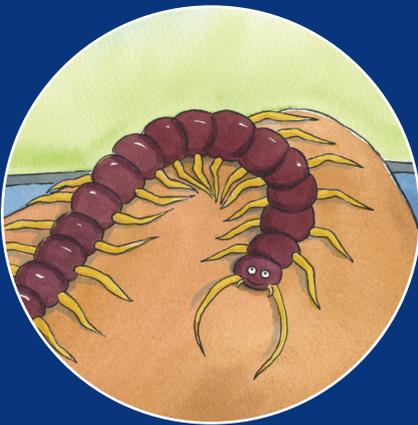
Beetle

Beetles are the 'Super Group' of insects. Around one third of all the world's animals are beetles. They come in lots of different shapes and sizes. The Titan beetle from South America can grow up to 21 cm long!



Cricket

Trillions of crickets exist at any one time in the world. A cricket can jump 50-60 times its body length!



Centipede

The name 'centipede' means 'hundred legs', but most centipedes don't have a hundred legs. They usually have 15 to 30 pairs of legs. One giant centipede in Central and South America eats mice, lizards and frogs!



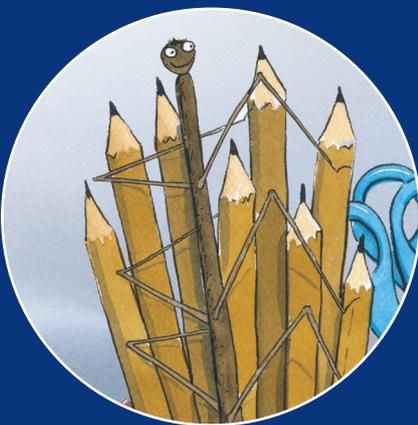
Spider

Spiders are arachnids, not insects, because they have two body parts instead of three. Spiders have eight legs while insects have six. Spiders are found on every continent of the world except Antarctica. Spider silk is five times stronger than steel!



Cicada

The name cicada means tree cricket. Cicadas spend most of their life underground as larvae and come up as nymphs. The nymphs shed their exoskeleton and become adults. People in some countries like to eat cicadas as a snack.



Stick Insect

Stick insects have been around for 40 million years! They are camouflage experts and can change their colour to the colour of a leaf or a twig and play dead to keep safe, falling to the ground and waiting until the danger has passed.



Huhu

Huhu has a body length of five centimetres. Adult huhu don't eat and live for only two weeks! Huhu grubs are the larvae of the huhu beetle. Fat grubs were favourite food of Māori. At night huhu beetles are attracted to the lights in our houses.



Frog

There are over 5000 species of frog in the world. New Zealand's native frogs (pepeketua) belong to an ancient group of frogs that have changed very little in the last 70 million years. Hamilton's frog, which is found on Stephen's Island, is one of the rarest frogs in the world.

Weta

Weta are large, spiny insects that are found in dark, damp places in gardens and bush throughout New Zealand. Be sure to check that gumboot before you put it on — a weta may be hiding inside! There are 70 different species of weta and all of them live in New Zealand. Weta are older than some dinosaurs! They are related to grasshoppers, locusts, crickets and katydids. Like these insects, they have powerful hind legs for jumping.

New Zealand weta are in five main groups: **tree weta (pūtangatanga)**, **ground weta**, **cave weta (tokoriro)**, **giant weta (wētāpunga)** and **tusked weta**.



Wētāpunga is New Zealand's **giant weta**. When a wētāpunga is fully grown it can be heavier than a mouse or sparrow. The giant wētā is the heaviest insect on earth. In 2011, a researcher found a very large giant weta, and he fed it a carrot!



There's no brotherly love between male **tusked weta**. They ram each other with their tusks. The Raukumara tusked weta has an unusual habit for an insect: if it is threatened it dives into streams and hides underwater. It can stay under water for up to three minutes.



The **cave weta** has enormously long legs and feelers. It gathers in dark, damp shelters, and loves dark caves and old tunnels. Creep into a cave, turn the torch up to the roof and ...



The **ground weta** is a cool drummer. To attract mates, ground weta drum on their abdomens. If you have access to the internet, you can listen to the drumming at <http://www.terrain.net.nz/uploads/Te%20Henui/groundweta%20drumming.wav>



Amazing! New Zealand's **mountain stone weta** has special proteins that stop ice crystals forming in its cells. It can survive being frozen for months! When spring comes it thaws out and crawls away. The mountain stone weta looks like a giant weta but surprise — it's a tree weta.



Tree weta are the most common of New Zealand's weta species so if you live in the North Island it's likely you'll have the common tree weta living in your garden. Tree weta like to live in groups and you could make them a home to keep them safe from hedgehogs, birds, rats and mice, and from your cat!