

Tuatara and the Sun

Years 1-4



Overview

Learn about tuatara and why the Sun is so important to them.

Curriculum links: NZ Curriculum

LEARNING AREAS	ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES	LEVELS	YEARS
Science: Living World: Life processes	Recognise that all living things have certain requirements so they can stay alive.	1-2	1-4
Nature of Science: Investigating in science	Extend their experiences and personal explanations of the natural world through exploration, play, asking questions, and discussing simple models.and human induced.	1-2	1-4
Living World: Evolution	Recognise that there are lots of different living things in the world and that they can be grouped in different ways.	1-2	1-4

Other links:

English: Listening, Reading and Viewing

Teacher information

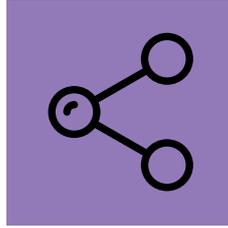
Learning sequence



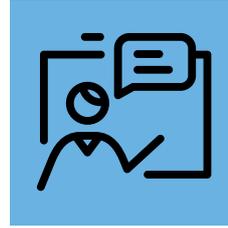
Introducing knowledge



Explore and investigate



Make and share



Reflect and extend



Make a difference

Learning intentions

Students are learning to:

- recognise a tuatara and understand that they are reptiles
- identify why the Sun is important for tuatara to survive

Example success criteria

Students can:

- make a tuatara puppet and explain what a tuatara is
- explain why the Sun is important for tuatara

Resources needed

[Tuatara and the Sun presentation](#)

Vocabulary:

Tuatara, reptile, survive, sun, heat.

Background information

Tuatara are endangered New Zealand animals. They belong to the reptile group because they lay eggs, have scales, have a backbone and are cold-blooded/ectotherms. Although tuatara belong to the reptile group, they are not lizards. They have some unique ancient features such as two rows of teeth in the top of the skull, a spiny egg-tooth and a third eye.

The name tuatara means peaks on the back or spiny back in te reo Māori.

At this time, tuatara are only found in the wild on offshore islands, due to habitat loss and introduced predators.

Learning experience suggestions

Note: These are suggestions only and teachers are encouraged to adjust the activity to suit the needs and interests of their students.



1. Introducing knowledge

Allow approximately 15 minutes

Introducing the tuatara and cold-blooded animals (ectotherms)

- View the [Tuatara and the Sun presentation](#)
 - Also view the Genesis School-gen video: [Tuatara encounter](#): (4 minutes long). The video is also part of the slideshow above.
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- After viewing, discuss what a tuatara is, and why the sun is important for tuatara.



2. Explore and investigate

Allow approximately 10 – 15 minutes

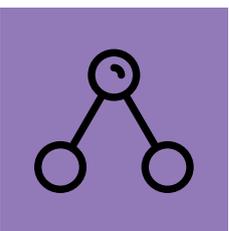
Thinking like a scientist:
Why do tuatara need the Sun?



Sit in the sun for about five minutes and pretend to be a tuatara. What do you notice about your temperature? Do you get hotter or cooler in sunlight? Does the sunlight make you want to move or stay still? Our bodies work differently from tuatara as we are not cold-blooded reptiles like they are. Cold-blooded animals like reptiles need the Sun's energy to keep warm. Tuatara will lie in the sun to get more energy. A tuatara can move fast and hunt for food when its body is warm.



Image: Public domain wikipedia commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tuatara_basking_in_the_sun_clos

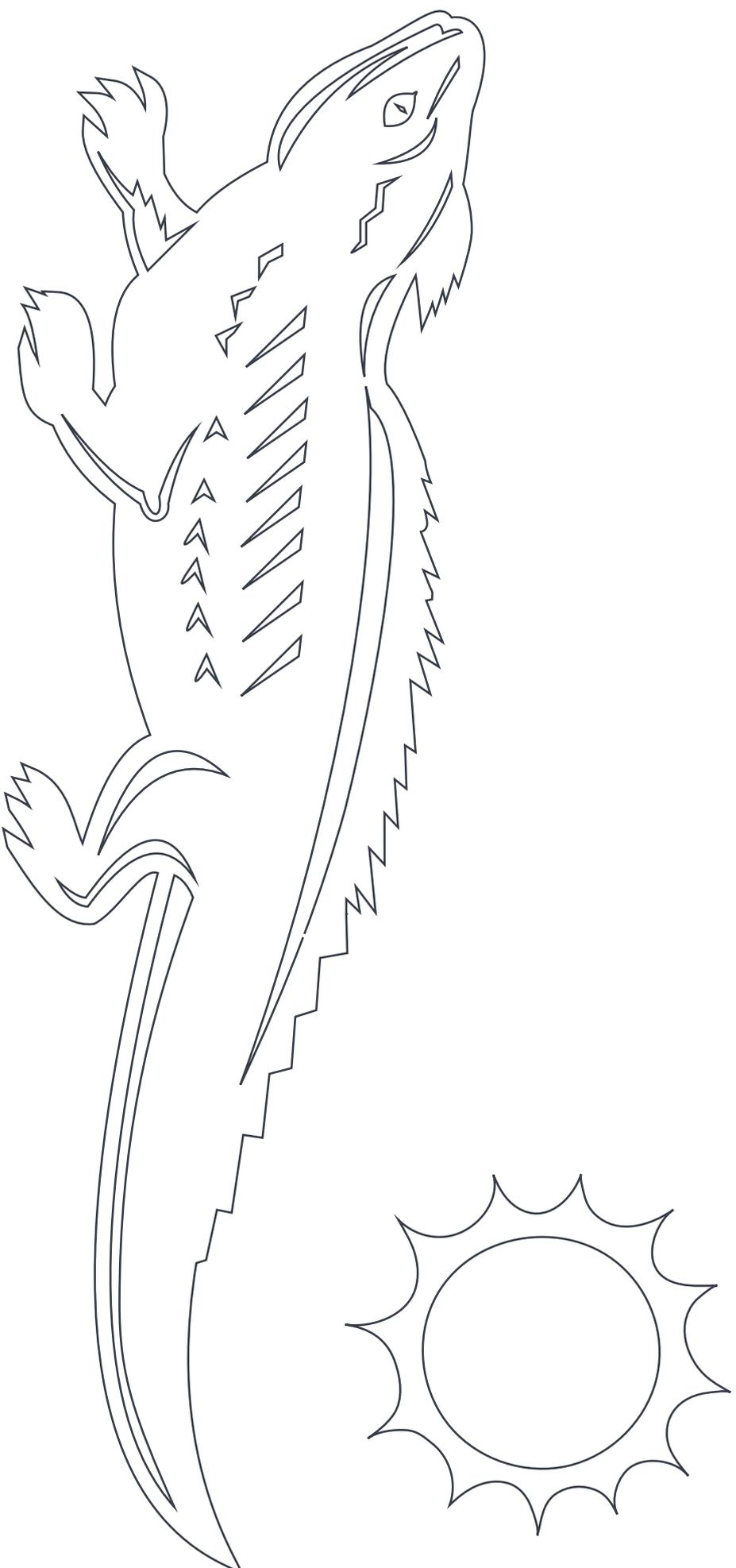


3. Create and share

Allow approximately 20 minutes

Tuatara colouring/puppet

Colour in your tuatara and use it to make a model or puppet with biodegradable materials such as cardboard rolls, paper and ice block sticks.





4. Reflect and extend

Allow approximately 10 minutes

Make your own drawings or presentations about tuatara and the Sun. Show something the tuatara needs the Sun for in your drawing.



5. Make a difference

Timing will vary

- Tell other people about our amazing tuatara. Share your new knowledge about tuatara and the Sun.
- Discuss the threats that are present in our community for tuatara, e.g. introduced predators such as rats and stoats.
- What can we do about these threats? Commit to one action as a class to make a difference for one of these issues. For example, start trapping rats and stoats at home or at school.
- If you're visiting offshore islands where tuatara live, be sure you don't take pests with you by checking your bags for pests thoroughly before you leave the mainland. Stay off islands where there is a no-landing rule.
- Support a restoration project where tuatara live a wildlife park or zoo which helps with captive breeding.

Other resources

- DOC information: [Tuatara:](https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/reptiles-and-frogs/tuatara/) <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/reptiles-and-frogs/tuatara/>
- Zoo tales: [Truly unique tuatara:](https://youtu.be/6NBHqMFjW88) <https://youtu.be/6NBHqMFjW88>