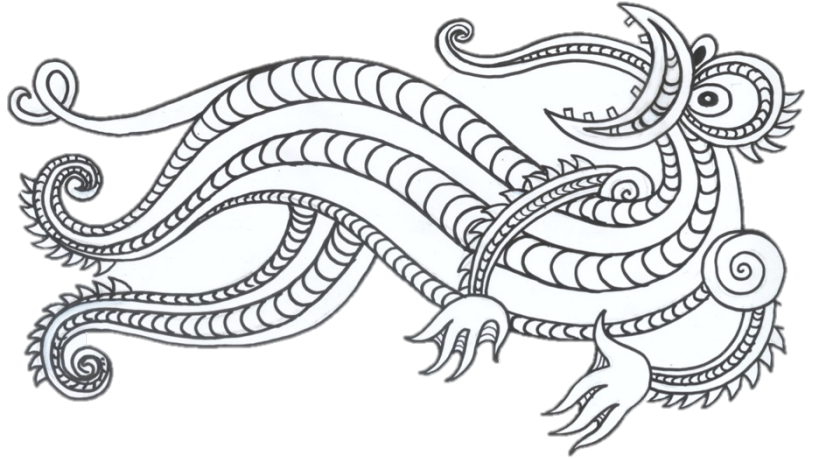


# Taniwha Factfinder

**Read the text and answer the questions!**

Did you know...?

Taniwha are supernatural creatures in Māori tradition. They look a bit like monstrous lizards (*ngārara*), dragons or serpents. They live in taniwha lairs (*rua taniwha*) in dangerous waterways, deep pools, caves, and under cliffs, rocks and mountains.



Some taniwha can talk, fly, or travel underground, and some are shape-shifters. They might appear as whales, dolphins, sharks, fish or enchanted logs (*rākau tipua*). Some are ancestors, and sometimes a person is turned into a taniwha.

Taniwha can be ferocious monsters which kill and eat people, but they can also be guardians or protectors (*kaitiaki*), especially when they are kept calm with powerful chants (*karakia*) and gifts of food.

It is said that the explorer Kupe had a guardian taniwha called Tuhirangi who came with him on his voyage of discovery to New Zealand (*Aotearoa*). He placed Tuhirangi in Cook Strait (*Te Moana-o-Raukawa*) to protect and guide canoes (*waka*). Some people believe that much later, Tuhirangi came back as the famous dolphin Pelorus Jack who guided ships there.

For some Māori, a taniwha is a symbol of old tribal wisdom, and a warning to respect the environment. Don't play in the river where the current is dangerous, don't be greedy with seafood (*kai moana*), don't dig up and destroy the land – or you will disturb the taniwha. And then there'll be trouble!



1. Match the Māori word to its English translation

lizards	karakia
taniwha lairs	waka
enchanted logs	kai moana
guardians	te Moana-o-Raukawa
New Zealand	Aotearoa
chants	rua taniwha
Cook Strait	rākau tipua
canoes	ngātara
seafood	kaitiaki

2. What are some of the shapes taniwha can appear as?

3. Describe what a taniwha might look like (use your imagination!)

4. Where might a taniwha live?

5. Who was Kupe and what did he do?

6. What was the name of Kupe's guardian taniwha?

7. "Don't go fishing from this rock at the beach," an old man tells you. "There's a taniwha!"

What other reasons might there be for not fishing in this place?