

COMPASSIONATE NATURE



BY IMAGEN8

ISSUE 18 | PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2025

No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced.

David Attenborough

WELCOME



Hello,

Seeing the young people enjoy themselves during the workshops, and looking through the work they share with us brings me a lot of joy! The amazing images in this edition showcase how much fun the young photographers have had these last few months.

Enjoy photo stories from our Nature Photographers who have been working on self-chosen projects - 'Nature reserves', 'Coexistence: Waste vs wild' and 'My macro backyard'. They have important messages to share with us through their images and words. This edition also includes images from Epsom Normal Primary School, Muriwai gannet colony, Karamatura falls, Birds and more.

Keep well,

Tushar Sharma



Kia ora,

Welcome to Issue 18!

In this issue, we were once again amazed by the way kids see the world and the boundless imagination they bring to their photographs. Their creativity reminds us how powerful a camera can be in the hands of a child and how it opens new ways to explore, express, and connect.

Each image tells a story filled with wonder, curiosity, and genuine emotion. We hope their work inspires you to slow down, look closer, and rediscover the world through their eyes.

Stay inspired,

Ana Lyubich

Compassionate Nature
Issue 18 | October 2025

Publisher
[IMAgEN8](https://www.imagen8.co.nz)
imagen8.co.nz

Editor
[Ana Lyubich](https://www.imagen8.co.nz)

Photographs and content copyright: IMAgEN8 and Tushar Sharma, unless noted otherwise. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of IMAgEN8.

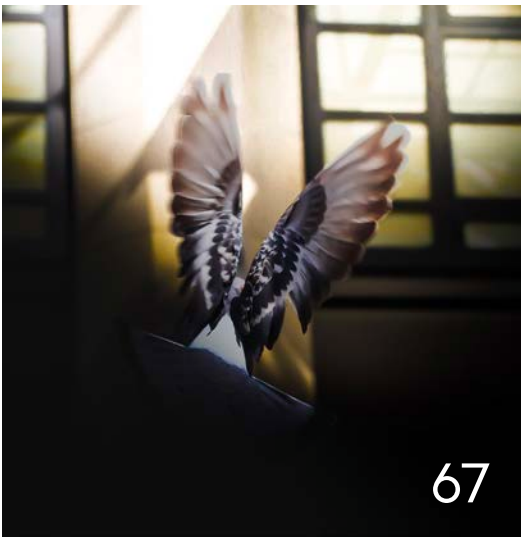
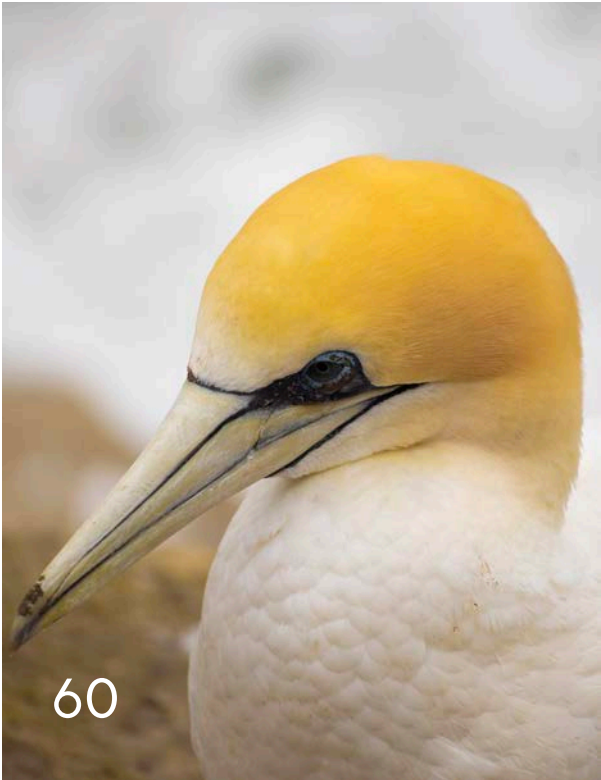
Cover image by Karla Tremain
All rights reserved @ 2025

ISSN 3021-2340 (Print)
ISSN 3021-2359 (Online)

Reproduction of any material appearing in this journal in any form is forbidden without the prior consent of the publisher.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Nature reserves | 6 |
| My macro backyard | 12 |
| Coexistence: Waste vs wild | 18 |
| Epsom Normal Primary School Programme | 24 |
| Assignment showcase | 34 |
| Gannet colony (Muriwai) | 60 |
| Birds and our living planet | 67 |
| Karamatura Falls | 90 |



Nature reserves

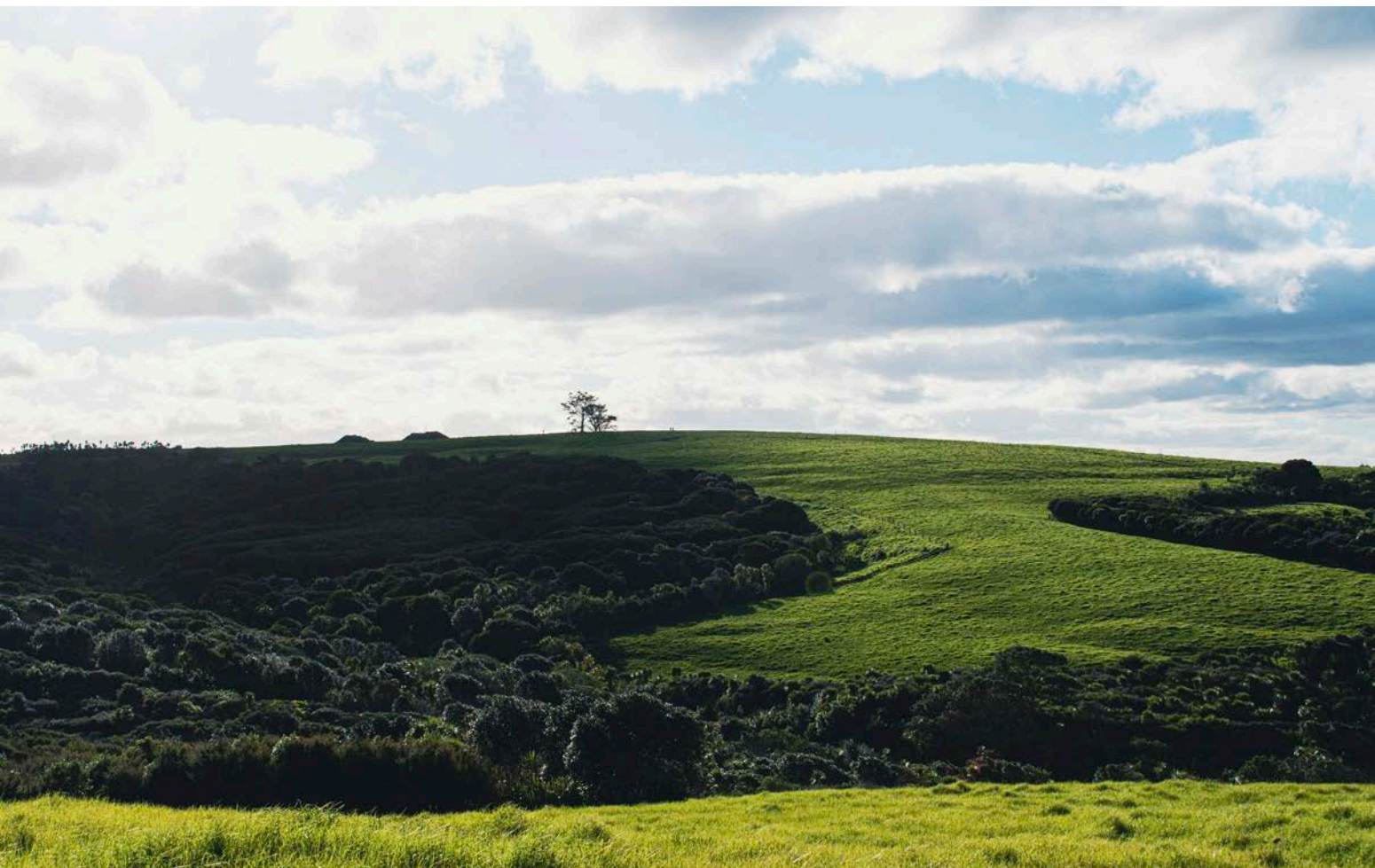
"For my photography project, I chose to focus on New Zealand reserves. I wanted to use photography to showcase how fortunate we are to have so much nature around us. Even in a city like Auckland, reserves are everywhere; some are well known, while others are hidden local treasures. I had so much fun visiting both, and feel my images really capture the diversity of nature and these reserves.

When I began this project, I had just moved to a new area, and it became a brilliant way to explore my surroundings. For me, when I look through the photos I have selected they remind me of my journey getting to know my new area and this is the story they tell for me. At the same time, each image holds its own unique, subjective story. That's what I love most about photography and nature: they invite us to see the world through both a shared and a deeply personal lens."

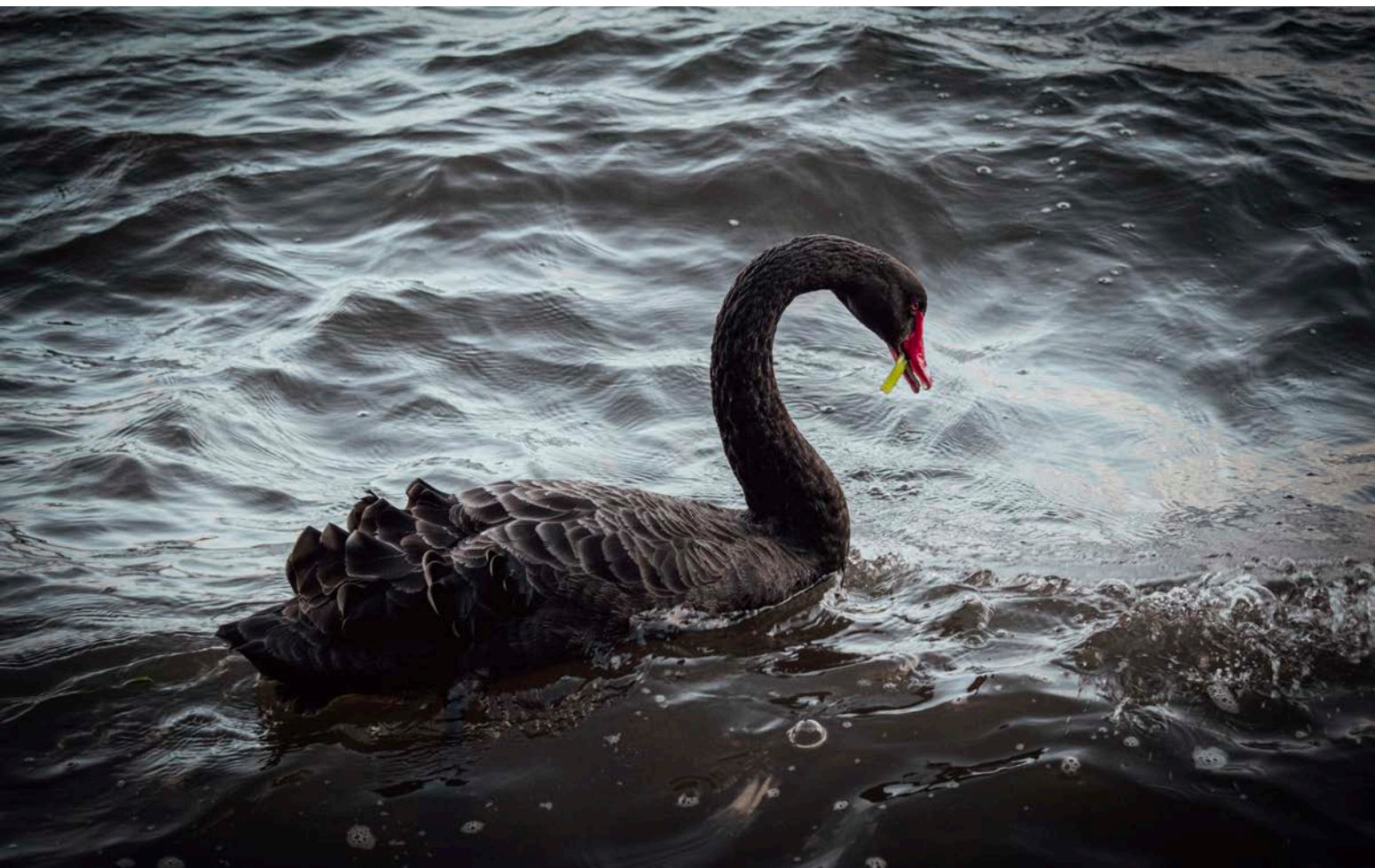
Sofia Mandle, age 16











My macro backyard

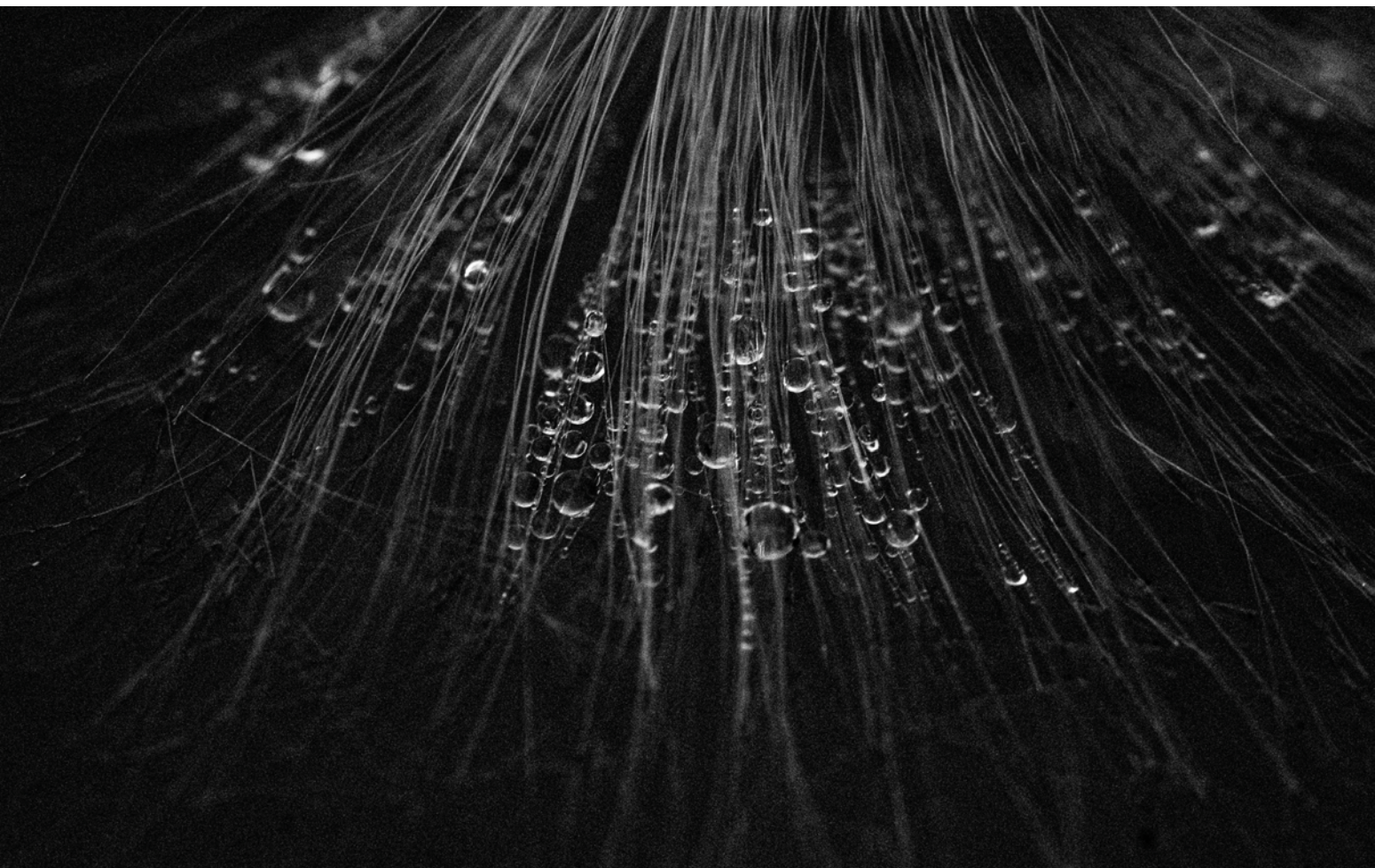
"I have really enjoyed getting to use the macro lens with my photography on this body of work. I have chosen to use my own backyard space as my area to find interesting things to photograph. It shows that you don't have to travel far to see interesting things, and that it is something everyone has within reach. The reason I love macro photography is because I really get to see details of different bugs, plants or minerals that people won't normally know are there.

Through taking all my photos I have been really drawn to the textures and patterns. On a wood louse I was able to really see the bumps of its compound eyes, and the hairs and segments of its antenna. On a butterfly I saw small almost feather-like hairs or scales. The hairs not just on a fly's legs, but across its back too. I found a mushroom that I could see the skin peeling back as it was growing. These are all such new things that I wouldn't normally see, and I want to continue making these little backyard discoveries for myself, and to show everyone what I've found through my photography."

Jesse Radford, age 13











Coexistence: Waste vs wild

“These photographs capture the beauty of nature and the harm caused when we forget to protect it. They invite us to look closely at the world we share with animals, plants, rivers, and skies, and consider how our actions affect their lives. Even small acts of pollution or neglect can leave long-lasting marks. Yet, nature continues to endure, waiting for us to choose better.

A rusting ship, unused pipes, and a dumped chair are more than just objects. They are symbols of what has been forgotten. A dumped beer bottle, a decayed tree in a river or a fallen bird's empty nest reminds us of what has been displaced. The colourful waste on the kerb and the danger

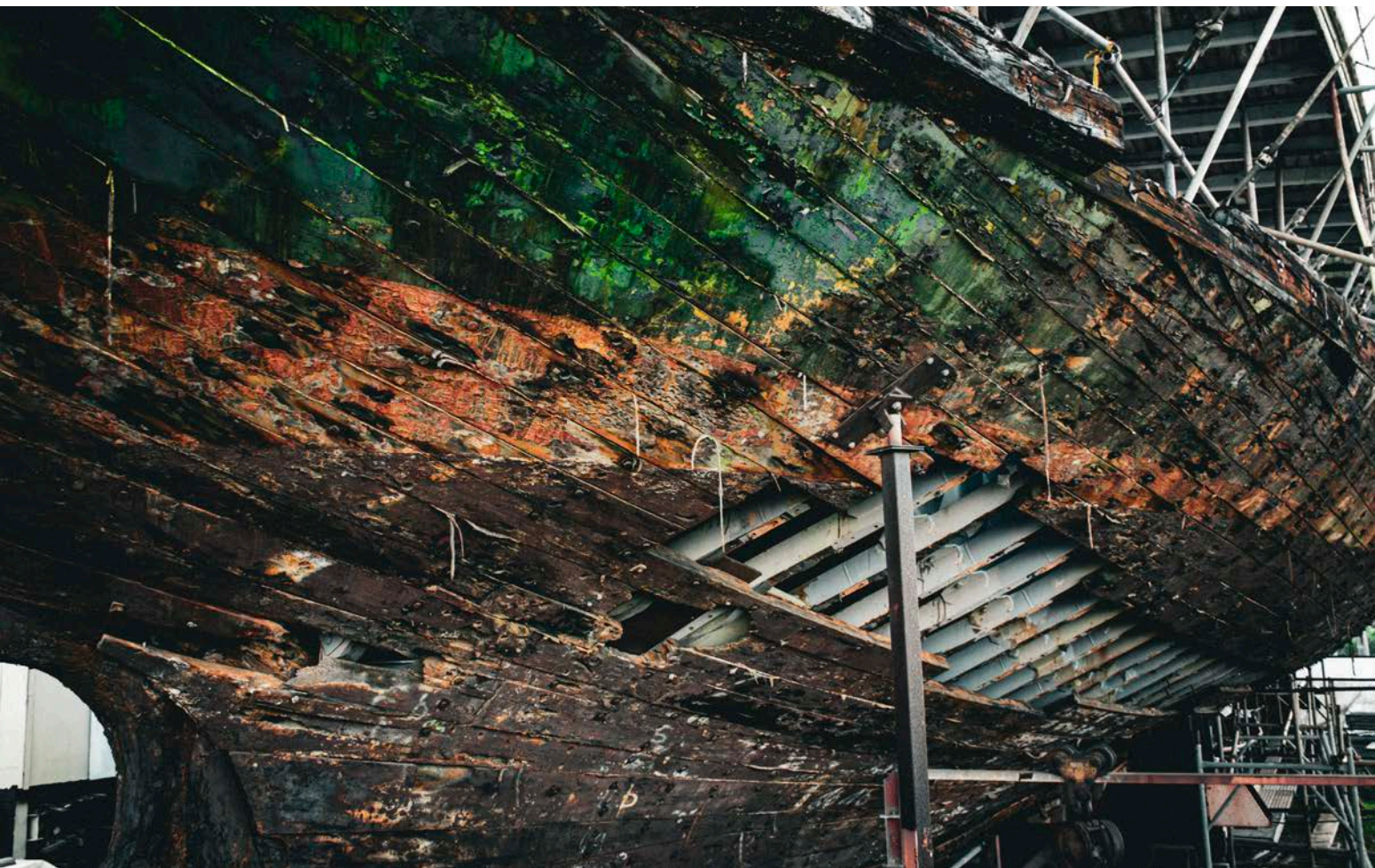
sign might catch the eye, but it also speaks of carelessness. And yet, nature continues to stand in the polluted world, like the peacock beside a machine built to dig and destroy, or the lone Pukeko among the trash. Each photograph presents a quiet but powerful question: What are we doing to our planet?

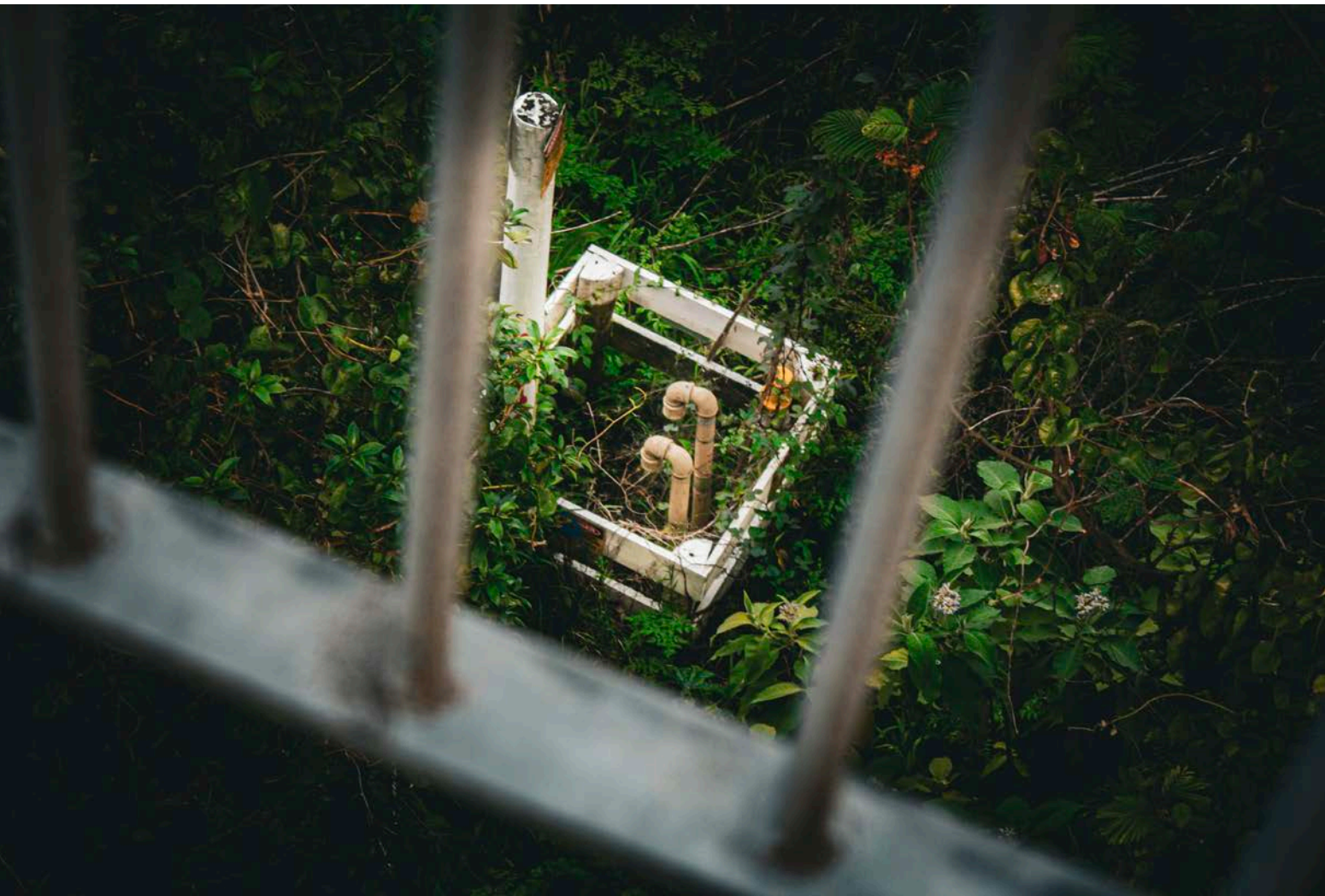
This project does not aim to blame. It aims to open the audience's eyes. It is about awareness. It is about recognising the little signs of a much bigger problem. These images are not just part of a photography project. They are a call to protect the balance between humans and nature before it is too late.”

Hillary Ho, age 11









YOU ARE HOLDING IN
ONE OF THE PUREST BEERS
CAN MAKE. NO ADDITIVES
NO PRESERVATIVES.
WATER, Malted Barley, Hops
AND YEAST. ALL SOURCED FROM
THE PUREST PLACE ON EARTH
NEW ZEALAND.

LAGER
Pure

Tasman
Sea

NEW ZEALAND BREWERY
111 CANTON DRIVE
WICKLAND 1023, NEW ZEALAND
CONTACT US ON 0800 000 000

Epsom Normal Primary School programme

This year saw increased groups of ten students per cohort, five from Y5 and five from Y6 supported by two teachers from IMaGEN8. The programme consisted of three workshops. In the first two workshops the students get to grips with using a digital SLR camera, learning the basics and exploring composition, light and creativity. The first workshop was held in the school grounds and for the second workshop we were lucky enough to explore some of the local parks. The last workshop was classroom based

in which the students wrote captions for their favourite images, shared each other's images and reflected on which ones they liked and why.

The students then proudly presented their work at a school assembly for everyone to see and admire.

Here is a showcase of some of the amazing images captured by the students this year.



HASINA NOWRI, AGE 9

I like this image because of its vibrant background and the contrast with the white petals.



AIMEE TANG, AGE 10



EVA-ROSE LIUPUHI, AGE 9

I chose this picture because it zooms in on the water drops, and the white adds contrast to the background.



JASAIRA MALHOTRA, AGE 10

I love how one of the lavender flowers is in its own spotlight. It really stands out. Also lavender is my favourite colour. The smoothness of the petals is quite attractive to me.



MADHVI NARAYAN, AGE 11

I chose this picture because the vibrant colours of the flower really stand out. I can see all the shades of orange in a single bloom, and my camera is focused solely on the flower.



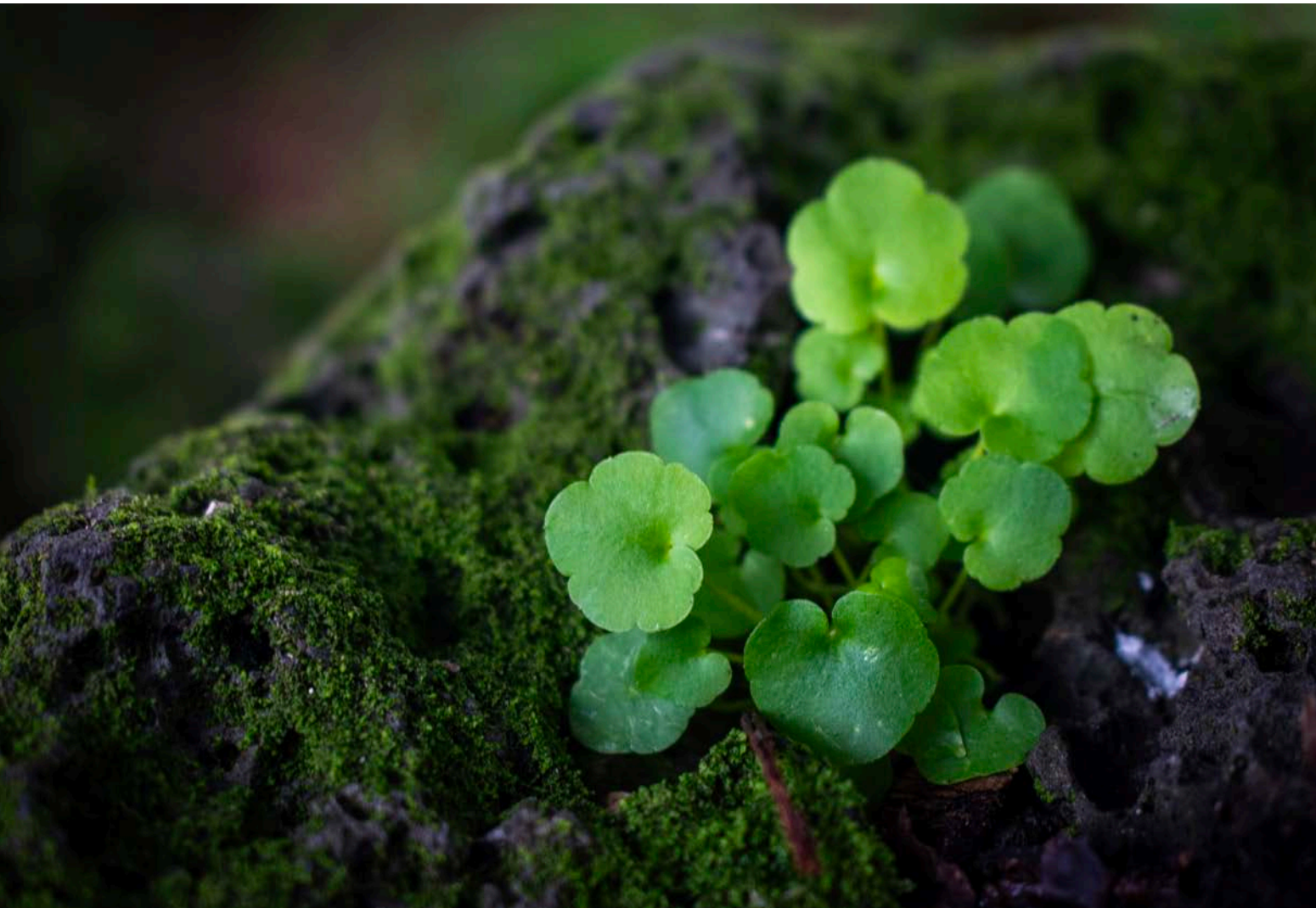
MADHVI NARAYAN, AGE 11

I love the nasturtium leaf with the water drops because they look like jewels with the sun shining on them and they are very beautiful.



VALERIE CHOW, AGE 10

Soft purple petals, Lavenders bloom at daylight, Sleep deeply tonight



YAE MATSUMOTO, AGE 10

I like this picture because of the way the light comes from the sky and touches the leaf.



YARISH YARISH GUGANESHAN, AGE 11

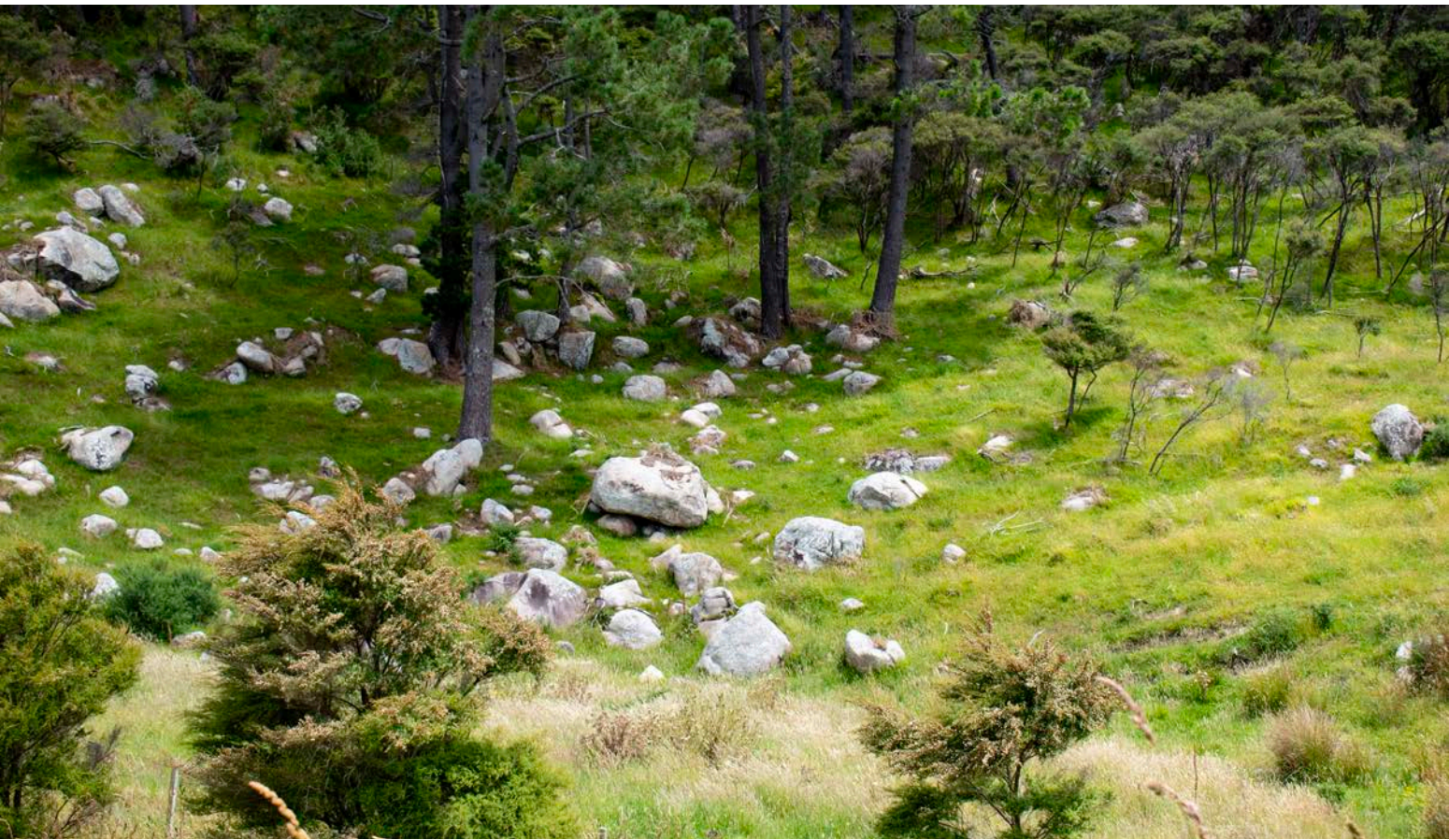
I chose this picture because I love how the dead sticks still look alive, And I also like how the sticks are going backwards together and that the sticks look like a net going backwards.

Assignment showcase

Students who are part of our Nature Photographers and Borrow-a-camera programs have been working on projects and assignments this year. Here is a selection of some thoughtful, mindful and beautiful images!



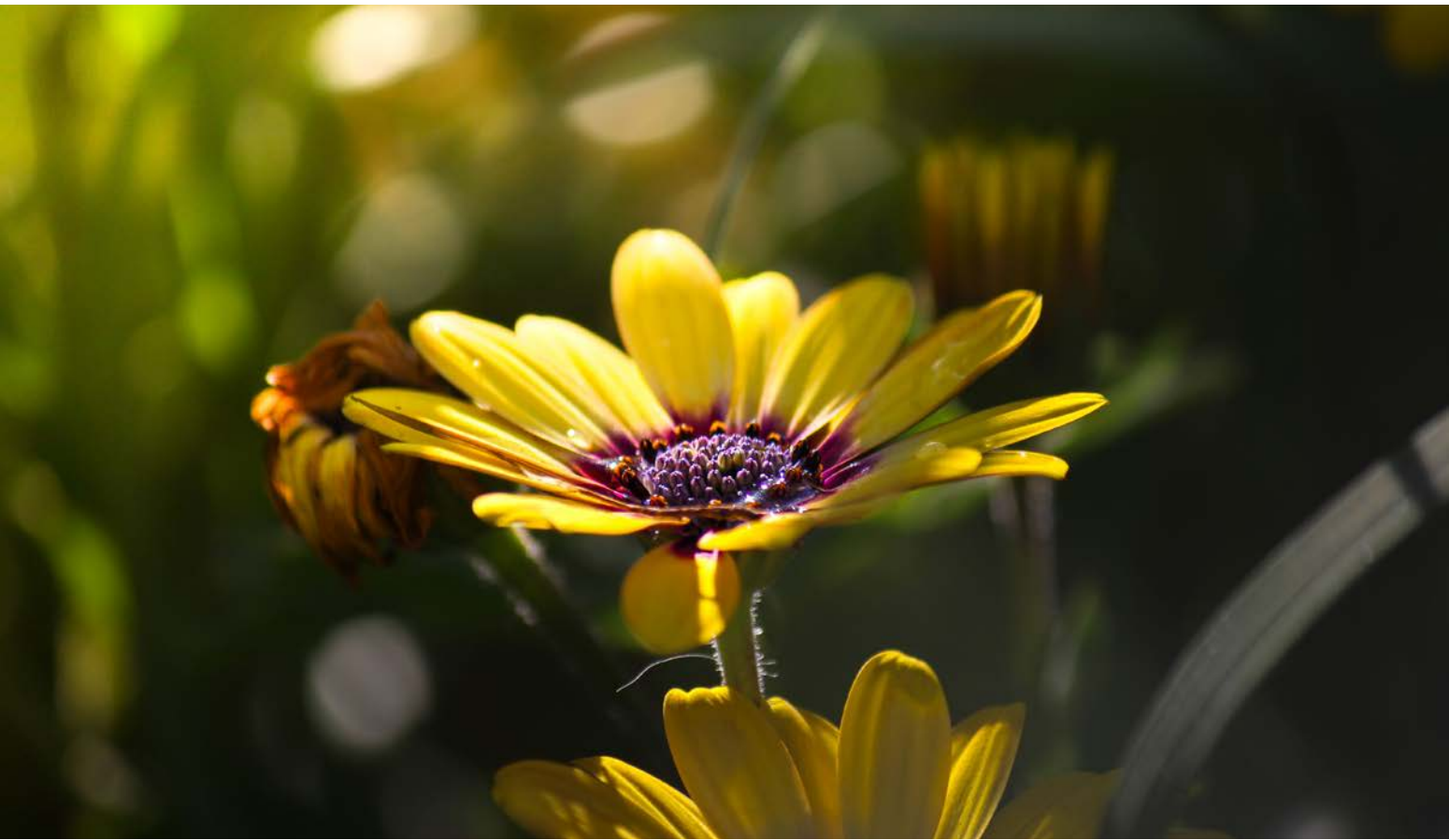
TANAV NALLA, AGE 12



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



ANJA BREYTENBACH, AGE 16



BENJAMIN PEENS-HOUGH, AGE 15



ELLA CROSSWELL, AGE 13



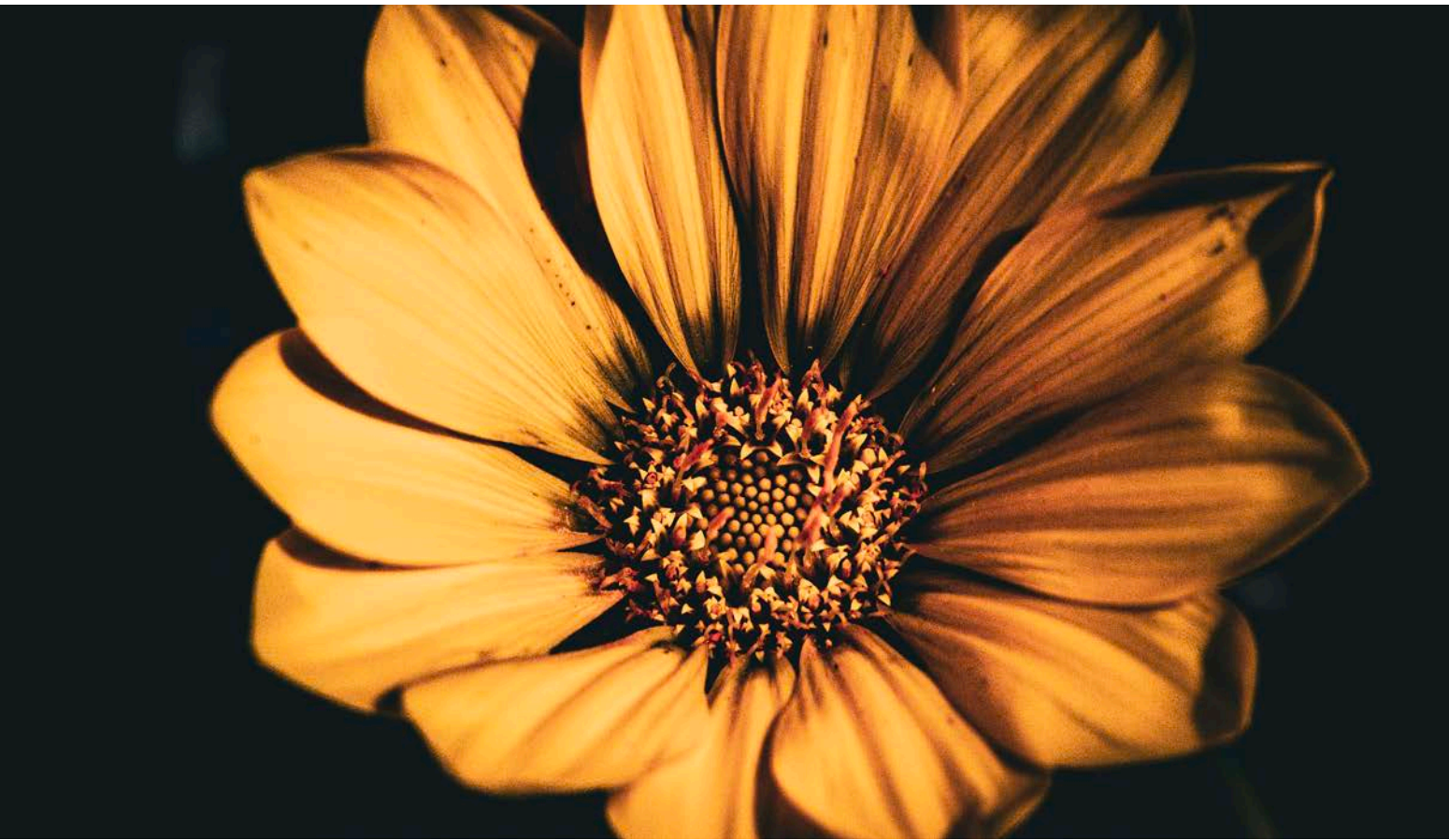
FINN BLACKSHAH, AGE 13



FINN BLACKSHAH, AGE 13



GABRIEL AUSTIN, AGE 14



INDIE FORD, AGE 12



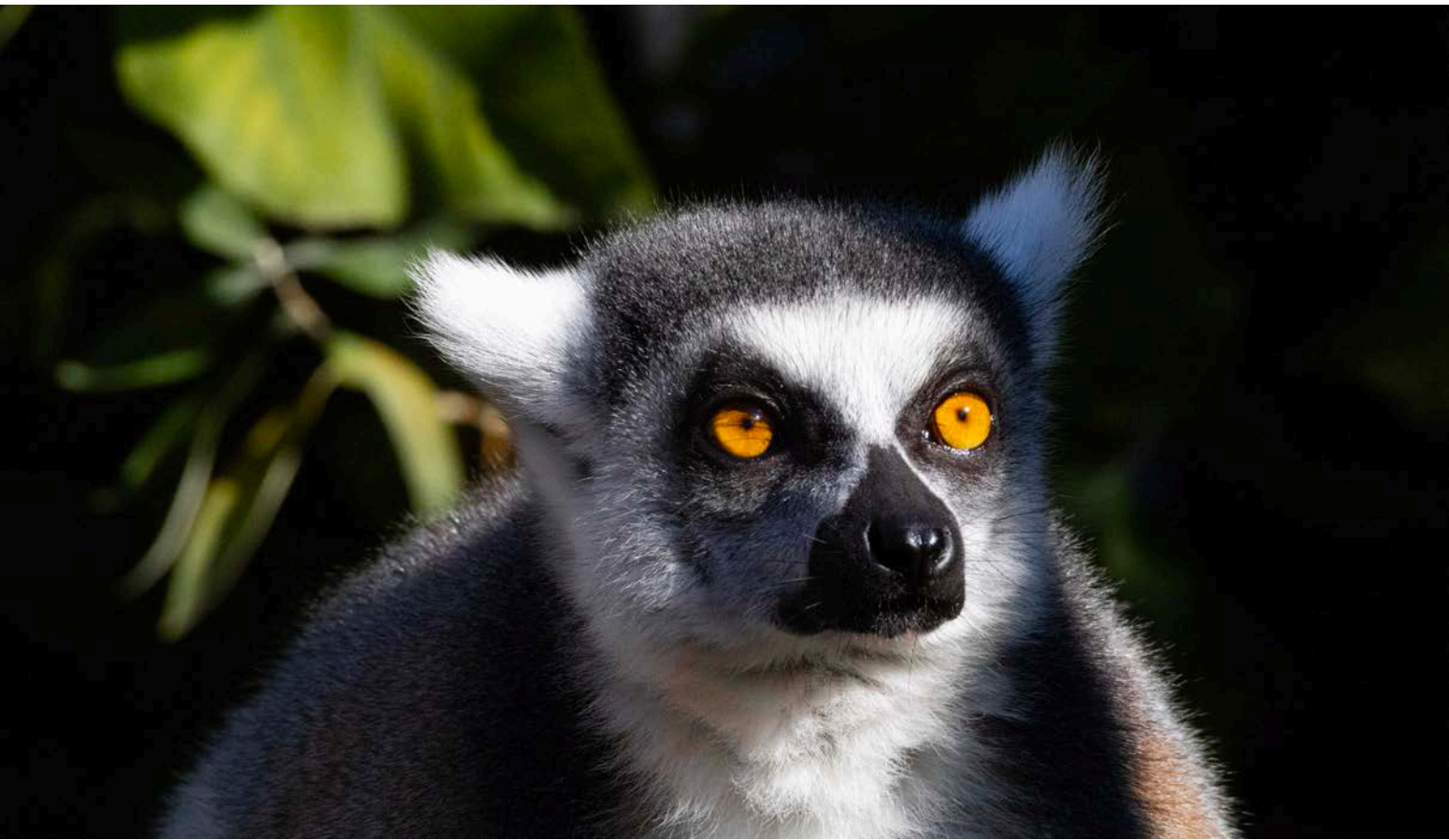
INDIE FORD, AGE 12



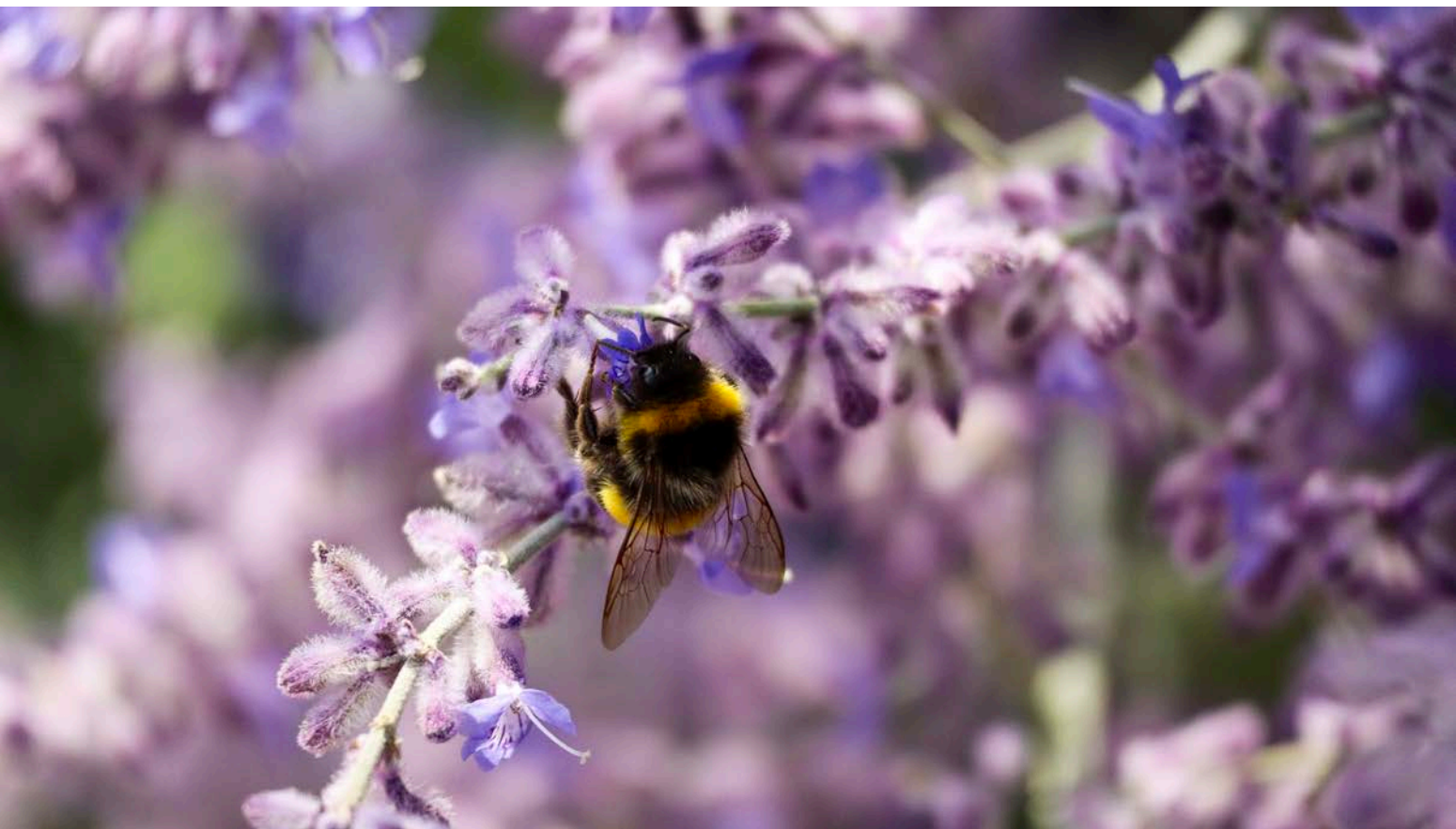
INDIE FORD, AGE 12



INDIE FORD, AGE 12



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



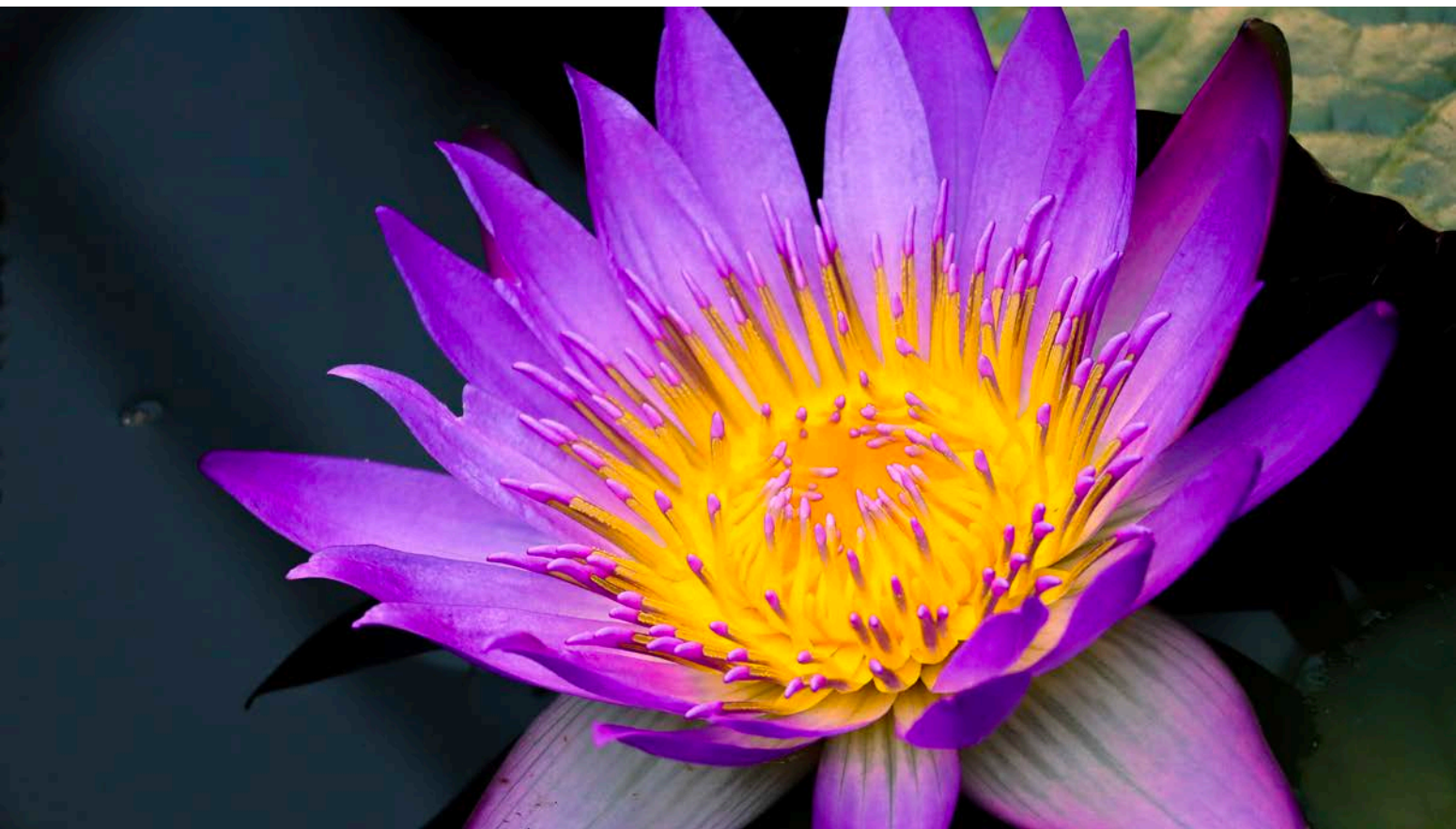
KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



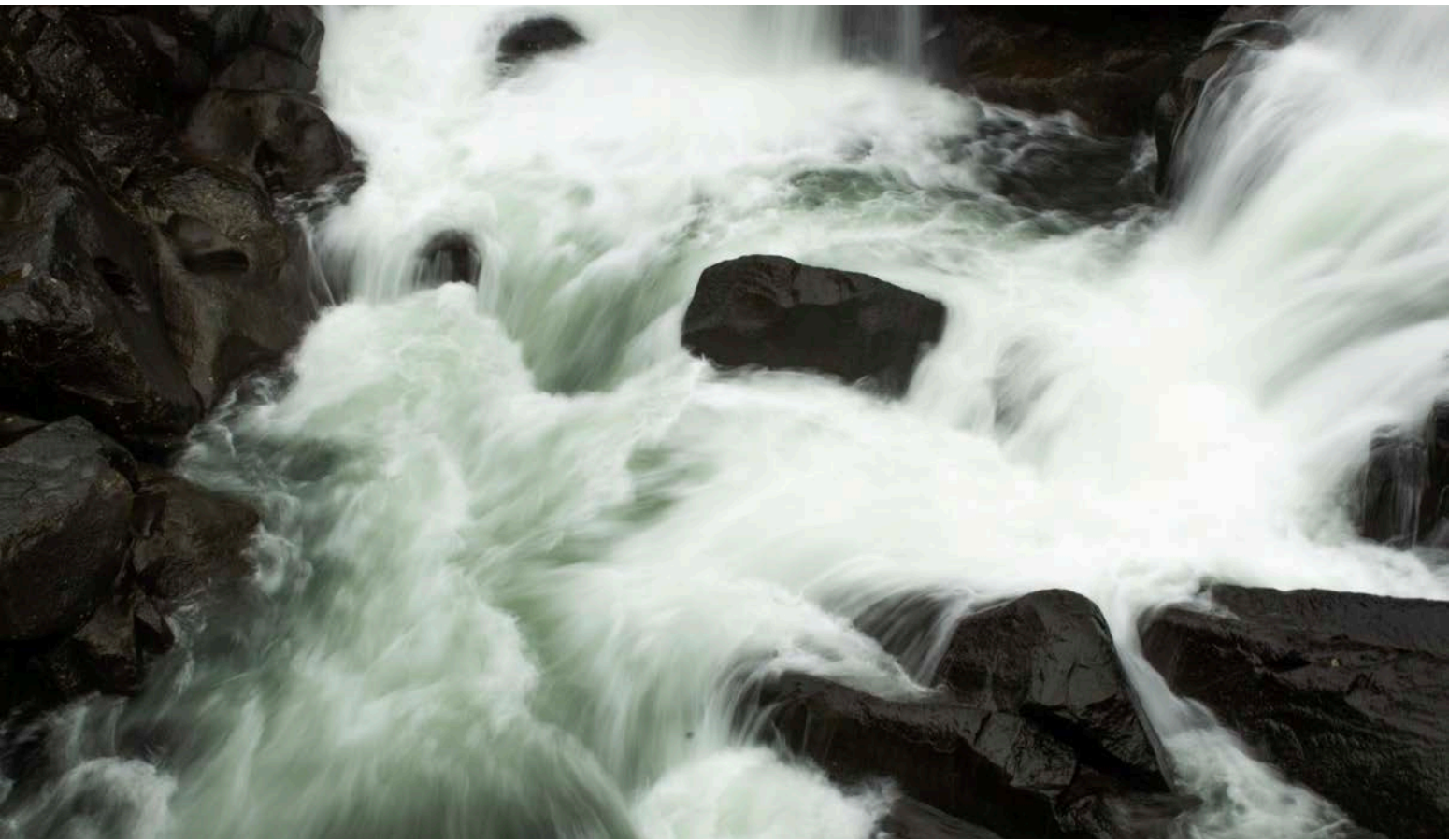
KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



LILY ZHONG, AGE 15



LILY ZHONG, AGE 15



MISHKA SOROKA, AGE 12



MISHKA SOROKA, AGE 12



RIO AIDA, AGE 12



RIO AIDA, AGE 12



ROY MA, AGE 10



ROY MA, AGE 10



ALISSA KANE, AGE 14



ELLA CROSSWELL, AGE 13



ETHAN FULLAM, AGE 10





INDIE FORD, AGE 12





LOLA MILLER, AGE 12





ROSE BAO, AGE 11



ROSE BAO, AGE 11



SAMUEL ZHOU, AGE 10



SAMUEL ZHOU, AGE 10

Gannet colony (Muriwai)

“The Australasian gannet, also called tākapu in Māori is a really amazing seabird that lives around New Zealand and Australia. They’re easy to spot because they have white bodies, black wingtips, and a golden-yellow head that shines in the sunlight. When you see them flying, they look super graceful, and they’re also awesome hunters. Gannets spend most of their lives flying over the ocean, looking for food. They don’t just float around either. They can travel long distances to find the right spot. One of the most famous places they come back to is the Muriwai Gannet Colony on the west coast near Auckland. Every year, hundreds of them gather there to breed, filling the cliffs with noise, movement, and lots of nests.

The way Australasian gannets catch food is pretty epic. They dive-bomb the sea from really high up, folding their wings back and shooting into the water like a missile. They can dive from 30 metres in the air, which is about the height of a 10-storey building! Their bodies are built for it too - their skulls are strong enough to handle the impact. Under the water they chase fish like pilchards, mackerel, and anchovies. Sometimes heaps of gannets dive at once, and it looks like the sea is exploding with splashes. When it comes to breeding, gannets usually stay with the same partner for years. They do cool greeting dances, like stretching

their necks, tapping their beaks together, and flapping their wings slowly. It kind of looks like they’re saying, “Hey, remember me?” The nests they build are pretty simple, made out of seaweed, grass, and dirt, all glued together with bird poo (gross, but it works). The female lays one blue egg, and both parents take turns keeping it warm. After about six weeks the chick hatches, looking tiny and helpless at first, but it quickly grows fluffy feathers. The parents feed it by spitting up fish until it’s big enough to fly off on its own.

The colony at Muriwai is really busy during the breeding season. The nests are crammed close together on the cliffs, so the air is filled with squawking, wing-flapping, and, honestly, a pretty stinky smell. But it’s also amazing. Visitors can stand on the viewing platforms and watch the gannets soaring and landing, with the huge waves of the Tasman Sea crashing below. It’s one of those sights you don’t forget. Gannets can live for more than 20 years, and they often come back to the same breeding place every summer. That’s why Muriwai is so important - it’s like a special home base for these incredible birds. Seeing them reminds us how wild and full of life New Zealand’s coasts are, and why we need to look after these places.”

Gabriel Austin, age 14



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



GABRIEL AUSTIN, AGE 14



GABRIEL AUSTIN, AGE 14



SWECHA NALLA, AGE 8



YI FEI FAN, AGE 13



YI FEI FAN, AGE 13



YI FEI FAN, AGE 13





TANAV NALLA, AGE 12

Birds and our living planet

“When you wake up in the morning in spring and summer, you can hear the natural world talking. This “voice” of nature is called the soundscape, and the loudest and most important speakers in it are often the birds. Birds are like the planet’s musical alarm system. Their songs and calls tell us immediately if an ecosystem is bustling with life, safe from danger, or dangerously silent. By paying attention to what birds sound like - or don’t sound like - we can figure out if we are on a truly living, healthy planet.

The clearest signal that an ecosystem is active and thriving is the dawn chorus. As the sun rises, birds across the world start singing at the same time, creating an amazing natural symphony. This isn’t just a choir; it’s a huge, noisy meeting where birds are taking care of important business. They sing to mark their territory, telling other birds, “This spot is mine!” They also sing to find a mate. A loud, varied, and vibrant dawn chorus is a strong sign that the habitat is healthy. It means there are enough trees and food for many different kinds of birds, and that they feel safe enough to advertise their presence. If you wake up to silence, it can be a warning sign that something is wrong with the local environment.

Birds have special calls for different things. A gentle, soft chirp might just be a contact call, meaning they are keeping in touch with their family. But if a predator, like a hawk or a cat, shows up, they switch to a loud, frantic alarm call. This alarm isn’t just for that one bird; it is understood by all the other birds and even other animals in the area. When the forest is full of these diverse, everyday sounds, it shows

that the habitat is balanced - there are birds, food, and maybe a few manageable dangers. If the forest suddenly goes completely silent in the middle of the day, it usually means a serious threat has just flown by.

We can also use bird sounds to track the planet’s great rhythms and cycles. The arrival of a specific bird, signaled by a certain song, can tell us that the seasons are changing. For instance, in many places, when a certain songbird’s call returns, it tells everyone that spring has arrived. These are migratory birds that fly thousands of miles, and their calls are an indicator of the large-scale health of the entire hemisphere they travel through. If migratory birds stop arriving or their numbers drop, it tells scientists that something has gone wrong on their long journey or in their distant winter home.

Birds are the ultimate aural indicators of a living planet. Their songs, chirps, and cries are not just pretty background noise. They are real-time reports on the health of the land, the safety of the habitat, and the natural cycle of the seasons. The next time you hear a bird singing, remember you are hearing the sound of a place that is safe, active, and fundamentally alive. Protecting the birds means protecting the music of the living world.”



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



AN VU BACH KHUU, AGE 9



ANJA BREYTENBACH, AGE 16



EM MCDUGALL



EM MCDUGALL



EM MCDUGALL



EM MCDUGALL



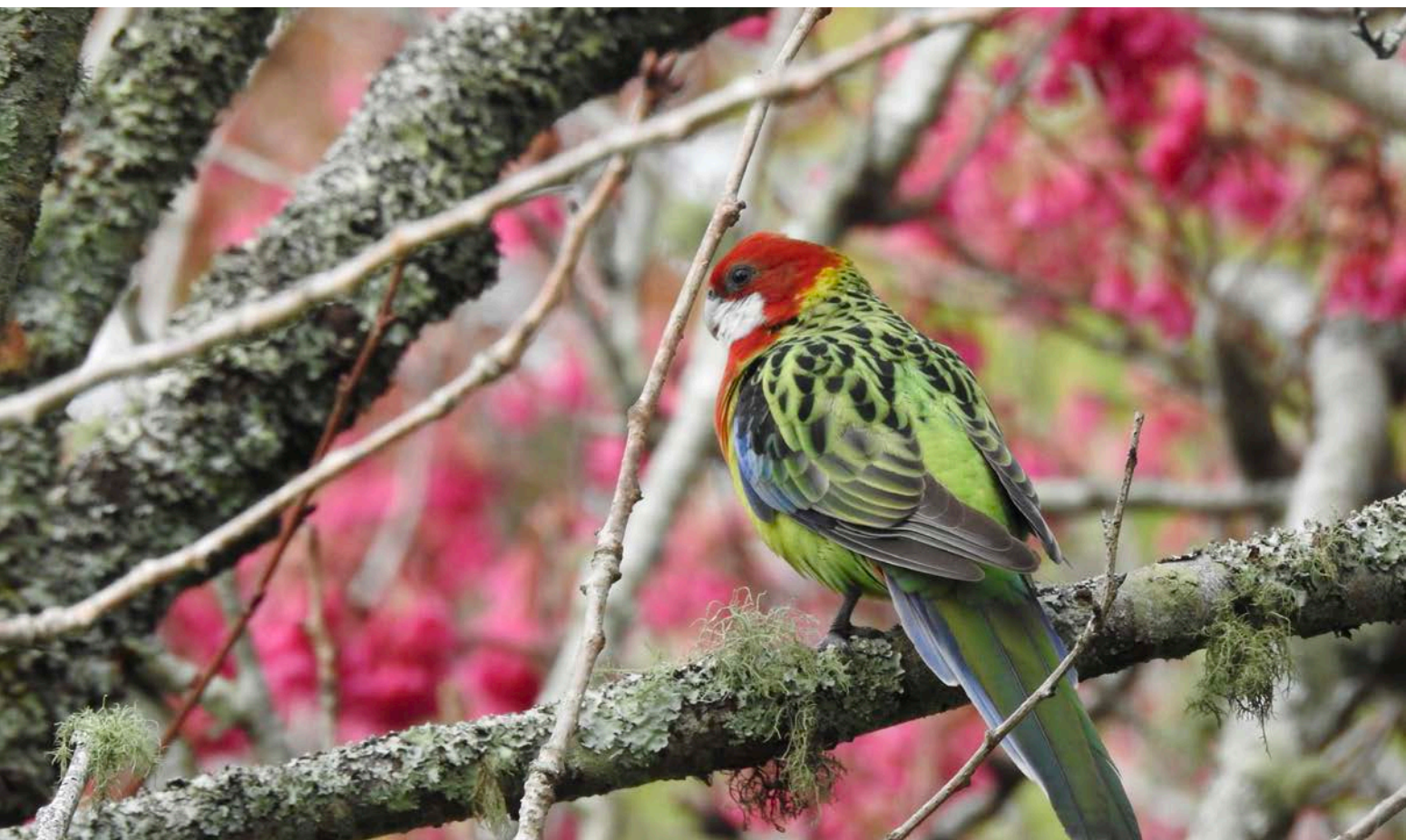
EM MCDUGALL



My project is centred around the manu (birds) of Aotearoa. It shows a variety of New Zealand birds, from land to sea, from endemic to introduced. Each image aims to highlight the unique colors, forms and behaviours of the different species, while also drawing attention to their habitats behind them.



ETHAN FULLAM, AGE 10



ETHAN MCRAE, AGE 14



INDIE FORD, AGE 12



INDIE FORD, AGE 12



INDIE FORD, AGE 12



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



KARLA TREMAIN, AGE 13



TANAV NALLA, AGE 12



TANAV NALLA, AGE 12



YI FEI FAN, AGE 13



YI FEI FAN, AGE 13



ALISSA KANE, AGE 14





ETHAN FULLAM, AGE 10



ETHAN FULLAM, AGE 10



FINN BLACKSHAH, AGE 13





TANAV NALLA, AGE 12





LOLA MILLER, AGE 12



Karamatura Falls

Karamatura Falls is a picturesque 15-meter horsetail waterfall tucked away in the southern section of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, near the quaint settlement of Huia, Auckland. It's a popular and easily accessible natural attraction, providing a refreshing escape into lush native bush.

The falls are reached via the Karamatura Loop Walk, an approximately 90-minute return track (about 3.5 km) generally rated as easy to moderate. The well-maintained trail follows the Karamatura Stream, leading through the valley floor and offering several smaller cascades and swimming holes before a short spur track descends to the main waterfall's base. It's a relatively short walk, but prepare for some steep sections with stairs.

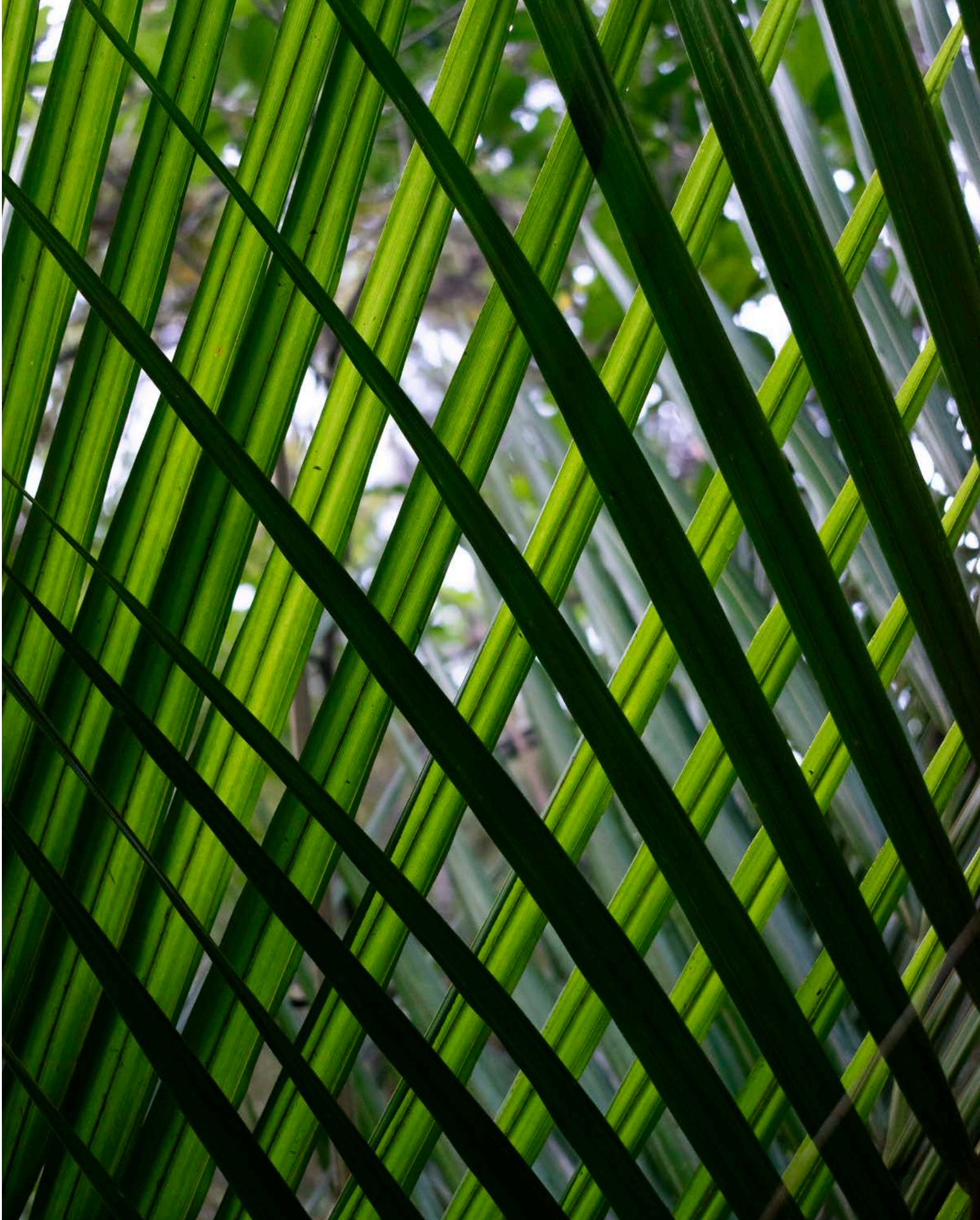
We ran two workshops on this track this winter, and the young photographers found an amazing diversity of life and landscapes. The trail walks through thick bush and follows a stream. There is a huge variety of plants and trees along the walk - Kauri, Ponga, Nikau and

several other varieties of ferns and trees. We passed a large Kauri tree early on the track with its root overhanging the track. We found lichen and fungi on the ground and on trees - very exciting to find and sometimes challenging to photograph. We spotted spiders and snails. We spotted criss-cross patterns formed by nikau leaves. At one spot by the stream, the whites at the bottom of the silver ferns were visible in the reflections in the water, giving away their secret. We stopped at a few smaller cascades with tranquil viewing rock beaches to admire the natural beauty. Karamatura Falls at the end of the track was a picturesque thin 'horsetail' water - the best views were from a rock outcrop that many took turns to climb. The mountains and cliffs rising above us on both sides created a comforting and wild environment for us to walk in. It's a lovely place to go for just a short walk to the stream and enjoy a peaceful sit by the sounds of water flowing. The area has a calming and welcoming energy that invites us to visit again!





DANIEL WICKHAM, AGE 10



DANIEL WICKHAM, AGE 10



DAWSON SUN, AGE 10





NEELAM OLSON, AGE 10



INDIGO JONES, AGE 11



DANIEL WICKHAM, AGE 10



ISLA HENLEY, AGE 11



ISLA HENLEY, AGE 11



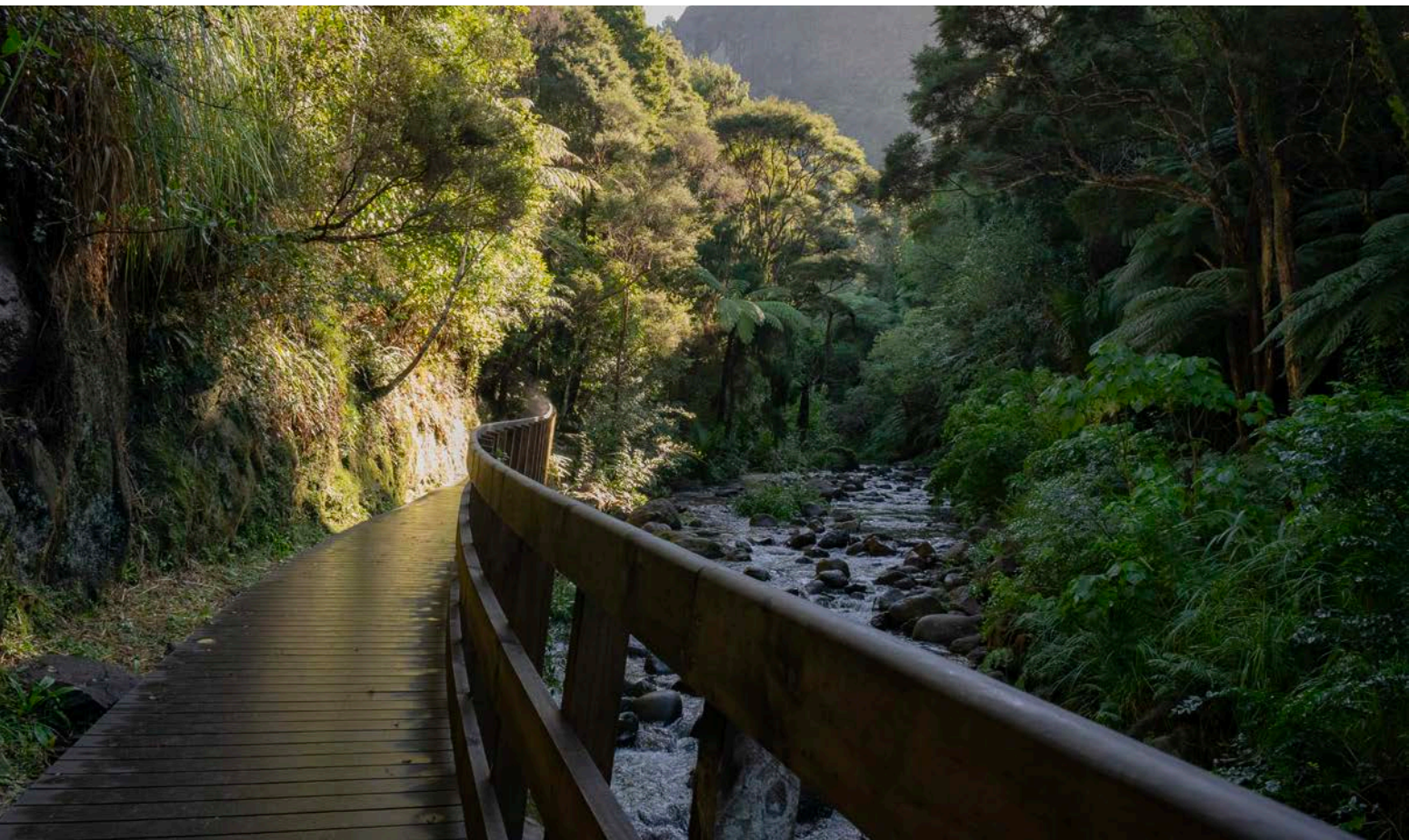
ISLA HENLEY, AGE 11



NEELAM OLSON, AGE 10



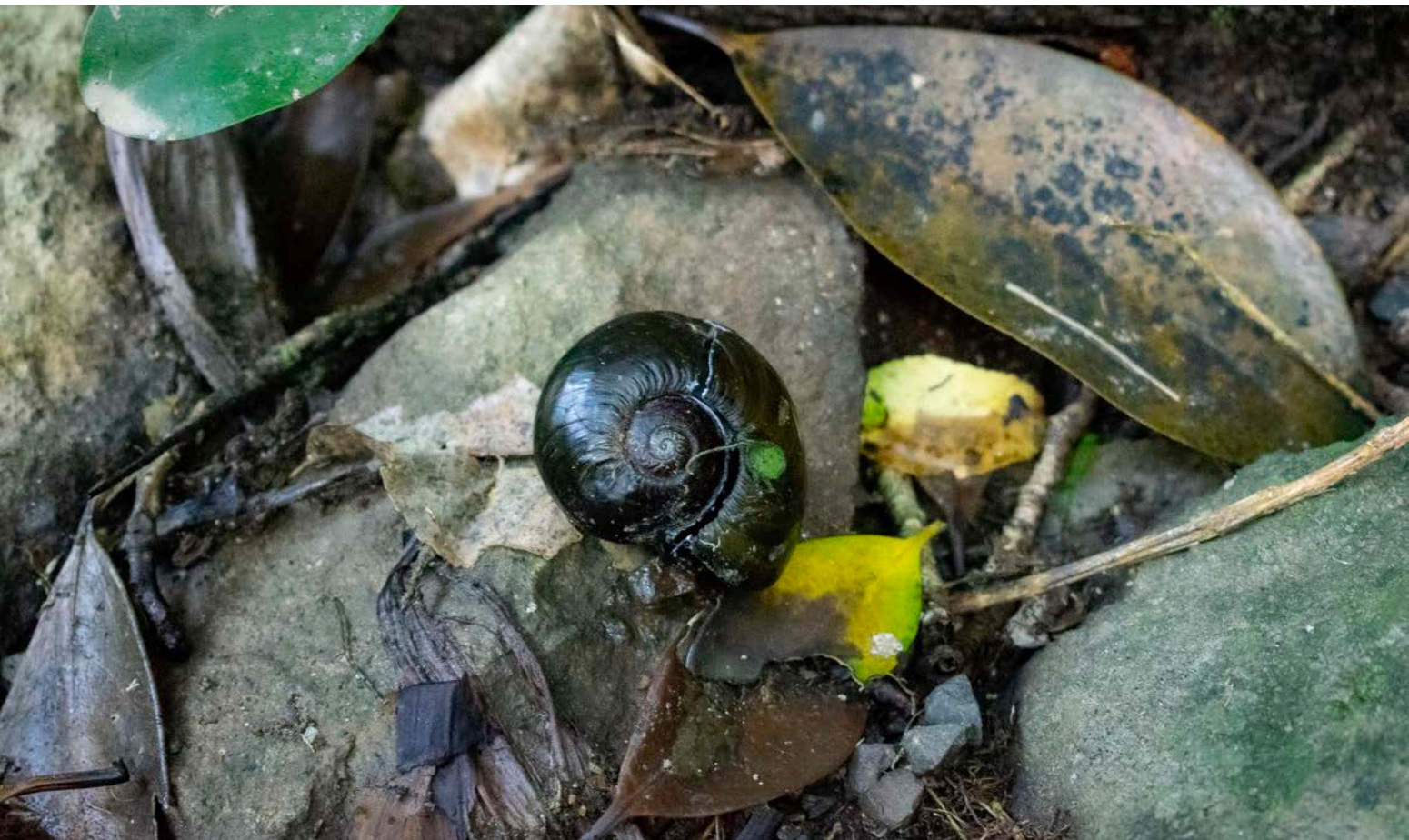
NEELAM OLSON, AGE 10



PHOEBE JOHNSON, AGE 11



PHOEBE JOHNSON, AGE 11



PHOEBE JOHNSON, AGE 11



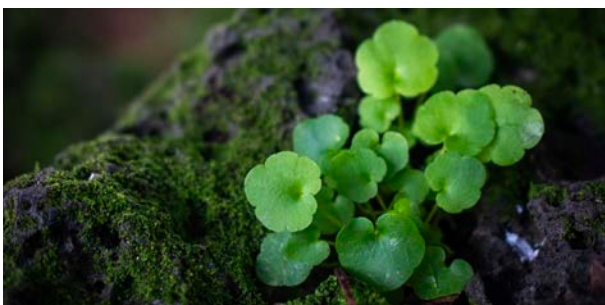
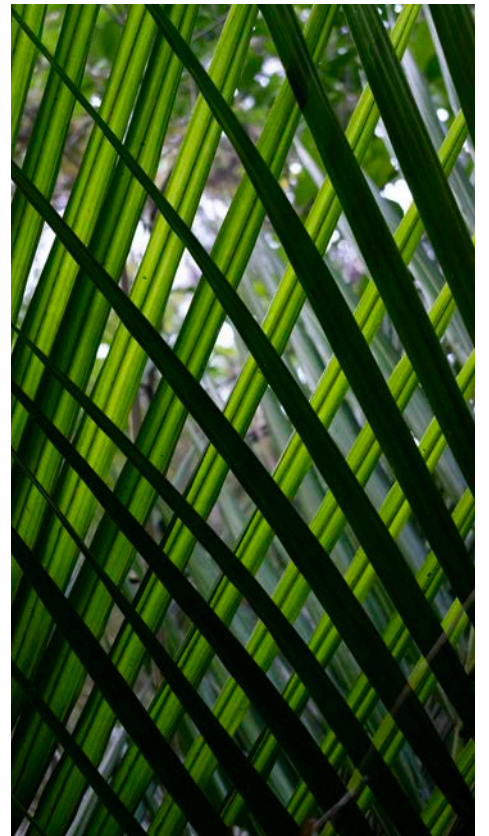
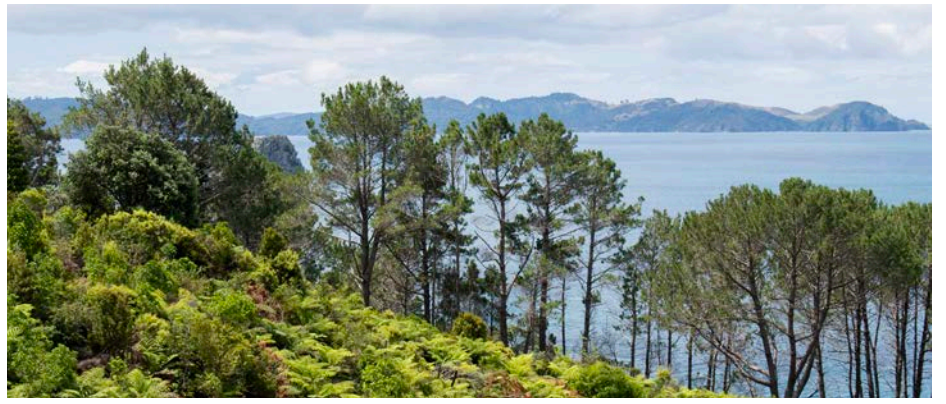
ImageN8 is a registered charity whose purpose is to foster sustainable connections with New Zealand's natural environment in our diverse communities through education, photography and technology.

The goal of our work with youth is to nurture their love for nature. Nature is essential for our mental and physical wellbeing - this wisdom has been part of world cultures for thousands of years and there is now a large body of scientific evidence behind this. Love for nature increases our mental wellbeing, fosters increased awareness for the environment, builds compassion, and manifests as kaitiakitanga. We give youth the opportunity to spend time in nature, exploring and experimenting with mindful nature photography.

We believe that by forming deep connections and love for our natural environment, we are happier, more compassionate, conserve what we love, and live sustainably and peacefully. This fuels our passion to work with diverse communities, ages, and schools, so we can contribute to fostering a more sustainable society and planet for us all.

We offer:

- Nature photography workshops: Held on school grounds and reserves, these workshops help youth ages 8-18 connect with nature, enhance wellbeing, and foster environmental stewardship through creative expression.
- Borrow-a-camera programmes: Initiatives like "Be an environmentalist" and "Be an artist" equip and enable students to capture compelling stories about nature through workshops, webinars and assignments so they can create images to inspire love and connection with nature.
- Free or low-cost activities: Our programs are available to students for free or at very low cost as they are funded through grants or through schools.





There's no Wi-Fi in the forest, but I promise you'll find a better connection.

SUPPORTED BY



This magazine is free - [subscribe](#) for new issue notifications. Follow our weekly updates on [Instagram](#).

Back cover photo by Isla Henley

Nurturing a love for Nature
imagen8.co.nz

IMAgEN8 is a registered charity.

The printing of this magazine is made possible thanks to the support of Keen2print Limited.