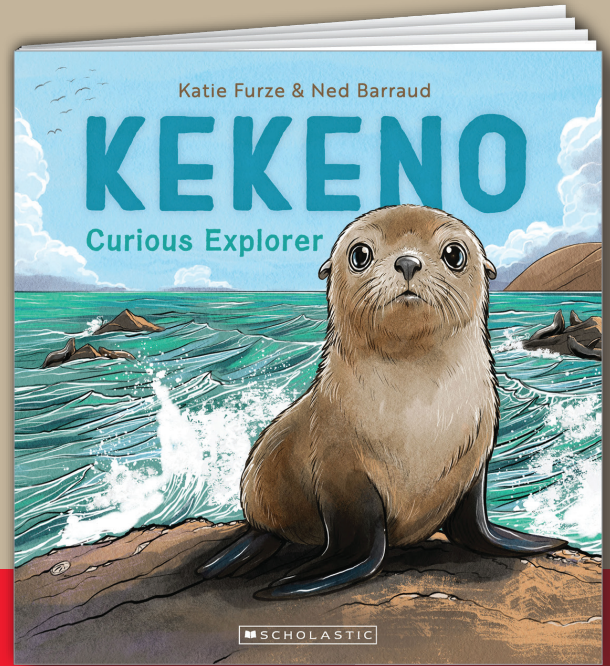


# Kekeno, Curious Explorer

By Katie Furze

Illustrated by Ned Barraud



• Reading • Writing • Science • Social Studies • Art

## Synopsis

On a rocky New Zealand shore, under the hot summer sun, a newborn fur seal pup takes his first curious look at the world. Kekeno is only hours old, but already he is strong, adventurous and eager to explore. As he grows, he must learn to survive in a busy seal colony while his mother leaves on long fishing trips at sea.

Through the changing seasons, Kekeno grows stronger and more confident. He learns to swim, dive deep beneath the waves, and hunt for fish and squid using his sharp senses and sensitive whiskers. But life in the ocean is not without danger, from powerful storms and hungry predators to the hidden threats of fishing nets and busy boats.

When Kekeno leaves the safety of his colony, his curiosity leads him on an unexpected adventure far from the sea and into the human world. Eventually, guided by instinct, Kekeno finds his way back to the ocean where he belongs.

The back matter includes fascinating information about New Zealand fur seals (kekeno), their behaviour, history and conservation, along with helpful advice about what to do if you encounter a fur seal on land.

## About the Author

**Katie Furze** writes children's fiction and non-fiction, including picture books, short stories, articles, plays, readers and novels. You can read her work in the New Zealand School Journal, or The School Magazine in Australia. Katie has also written stories in anthologies and readers and plays for educational publishers. *Tuatara, A Living Treasure* was her first non-fiction picture book with Scholastic, followed by *Ruru, Night Hunter* and *Pekapeka, Secret Forest Bat*. Katie has a master's degree in creative writing and is fascinated by science and nature. When she's not reading or writing, she enjoys the outdoors, tramping, yoga, travelling and scuba diving. She lives in Auckland with her family.

## About the Illustrator

**Ned Barraud** studied art in Otago and illustration at Victoria University and has since authored and illustrated a number of children's books including the highly successful 'Explore and Discover' series about different ecosystems in New Zealand, and several other books on his own, including *At Home on the Farm* and *New Zealand's Backyard Beasts*. Always fascinated by the form and beauty of the animal kingdom, Ned loves to help introduce children to the natural world around them and encourages them to explore it. This is his fourth collaboration with Katie Furze, following on from *Tuatara, Ruru* and *Pekapeka*. Ned lives in Nelson with his wife and children.

# Writing and Illustration Style

*Kekeno, Curious Explorer* is a 32-page non-fiction picture book for the 4+ age group. It's a companion title to *Ruru, Night Hunter*; *Tuatara, A Living Treasure* and *Pekapeka, Secret Forest Bat*. Katie Furze's love of science and the natural world shines through in her storytelling, which explores the life of a curious fur seal pup during his first year of life. The story concludes with baby Kekeno curiously exploring an urban setting before the sea calls him home.

The main text is written in the third person present tense. Literary features, such as alliteration and onomatopoeia, are woven into the narrative text. There are also informative non-fiction captions in coloured panels placed at the top or bottom of some of the pages throughout the book. The captions tie in with the subject matter covered in the non-fiction narrative. On the last double-page spread of the book, Katie features some background and historical information, as well as additional facts and safety rules, about the New Zealand fur seal, known as kekeno in Māori.

Ned Barraud's illustrations are created with ink pen drawings and digital colouring. They capture the drama of a fur seal colony on a rocky coastline in Aotearoa, as well as the turbulent waves and the inky depths of the deep ocean. The book's main type is set in Brother 1816 Printed, with some important parts of the story being set in a larger font size. Ned's passion for wildlife and nature is obvious in his detailed and realistic artwork. His illustrations will inspire young readers to appreciate Aotearoa's abundant marine worlds and the wonderful living things that dwell in them.

## Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Read the story aloud and have students read alongside you or follow along as you read. Use the questions provided to help guide the students and promote more in-depth discussions. Prior to reading, ask the students what they know about fur seals and their way of life. Have the students think of questions that they want answered in the book. Write them down for future reference. After reading, revisit the students' questions and discuss whether they were answered. If not, use them as a springboard to delve deeper into the topic.

### ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back cover.

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What do you think the word 'Kekeno' means?
- Do you think the animal on the front cover is an adult or a baby? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think the author has written the words 'Curious Explorer'? If this describes a fur seal, what do you think it's like?
- The author describes the fur seal as a 'sleek swimmer' and a 'deep ocean diver'. What kind of lifestyle might a baby fur seal lead?
- Why might the little fur seal's mother have left her baby? How do you think the baby takes care of himself while she's gone?

### COMPREHENSION:

- On the title page, the fur seal is chasing a fish. What does this tell you about the way fur seals get their food? (p.1)
- Why might baby Kekeno sniff the air? (p.2)
- Why is the air salty? (p.2)
- What does the author mean when she says that the rocky shore 'heaves' with fur seals? Have you ever visited or seen a fur seal colony? How would you describe it? (p.3)
- The author uses the words 'swaggering', 'sprawling' and 'wriggling' to describe how the adults and babies are moving. What other words could describe them? (p.3)
- Look at the illustration on page 3 and decide which of the animals are the adult males, adult females and babies, then look at the non-fiction caption text at the bottom of page 3. The author states that adult male fur seals are called 'bulls' and adult female fur seals are called 'cows'. What are baby fur seals known as? How could you find out if you didn't know? (p.3)
- Why would fur seals breed during the hot summer months? (p.3)
- Why would a pup be strong and curious when he's less than a day old? (p.4)
- What does the word 'suckle' mean? (p.4)
- Why might it be dangerous for a pup to wander away from his mother? (p.5)
- What other animals pick up their babies by the scruff of their neck? (p.5)
- Why might the mother fur seals leave their pups together rather than alone? What could the pups do together? (p.6)



- Do you think the pups are in danger when their mothers leave for one or two days? Explain your answer. (p.6)
- What might happen if the water rises too high? (p.7)
- Why are the first three weeks of a pup's life so dangerous? (p.8)
- How do you think the pups practise learning to swim? Where could they do that on the rocky shore? (p.8)
- Onomatopoeia is the formation of a word that sounds like what it describes. The word 'CRASH!' is an example of onomatopoeia. It is the sound that a wave makes as it hits a hard surface such as a rock. Why other onomatopoeic word could the author have used instead? (p.9)
- Where would it be safe for baby Kekeno to go? (p.9)
- Why would Kekeno's mother need to spend longer and longer at sea? (p.10)
- What does the word 'pod' describe? Explain that collective nouns are used to describe groups of things, such as animals. For example, a group of dolphins is also referred to as a pod. (p.11)
- Why are rock pools a great place for the young pups to play in? (p.11)
- Why do pups need to develop strength and agility? What other young animals spend a lot of time playing too? Why do you think playing is an important part of life for some animals? (p.11)
- Why does a fur seal pup need to learn about currents and waves? What might happen if they don't learn these lessons? (p.12)
- Why is the open water more challenging than rock pools or sheltered inlets? (p.12)
- Look at the words 'twisting', 'turning' and 'tumbling' on page 13. What do you notice about them? Explain that these words are known as alliteration, which is when two or more words start with the same letter sound and are used for effect. What other alliterative words could the author use to describe the way the fur seal swims? (p.13)
- What is the author describing when she uses the words 'inky depths'? How else could she describe the dark, deep ocean? (p.13)
- What does the word 'streamlined' mean? How would this body shape help a fur seal dive? (p.13)
- Why is being able to hold their breath for as long as 10 minutes helpful to fur seals? (p.13)
- Why do you think kekeno need to dive as deep as 300 metres? (p.13)
- What does the word 'prey' mean? (p.14)
- Kekeno use whiskers and large eyes to hunt in the dark. What other animal do you know also uses whiskers and eyes that can see in the dark to hunt? (pp.14–15)
- Why does Kekeno's mother shoo him away? Do you think Baby Kekeno is now old enough to take care of himself? Explain your answer. (p.16)
- Look at the top of page 17. Why would a ship be dangerous to Kekeno? (p.17)
- What does the word 'predator' mean? How do you know that sharks such as great white sharks are predators? (p.17)
- Who is responsible for stray nets in the ocean? How can people prevent them from ending up in the ocean? (p.17)
- How would to be helpful to have half of its brain awake and half of its brain asleep? Would you like to be able to do that? Why or why not? (p.18)
- What is an 'estuary'? Where do you find one? Have you ever been to one? What was it like? (p.19)
- Why do fur seals 'waddle'? (p.19)
- Look at the illustration on page 19. What dangers do you see? (p.19)
- Kekeno 'lumbers across a smooth, flat stone'. What does the word 'lumbers' suggest? Is Kekeno moving heavily or lightly? What is the 'smooth, flat stone' referring to? (p.20)
- The words 'Brrmmm!', 'Honk!' and 'Screech!' are examples of onomatopoeia. What other onomatopoeic words would a car make, such as 'Hoot', 'Toot' and 'Vroom', to warn Kekeno to get out of the way? (p.20)
- What does the word 'lollops' mean? The word 'lollop' is a verb, which is a word that describes an action, such as 'walk', 'run', 'swim' and so on. What other verb would suit the context of this sentence? (p.21)
- The author uses adjectives to describe the plants on page 21. She says that they are 'spongy' and 'green'. An adjective is a word that describes a noun (such as 'plants') or a pronoun (such as 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'we', 'they'). What adjectives would you use to describe the plants? (p.21)
- Read the caption on page 21. What does the word 'inquisitive' mean? Does it have a similar meaning to the word 'curious'? (p.21)
- Why do you think a fur seal would scare a cat? (p.21)
- The author writes 'Why not?' Why does she do that? (p.21)
- The author describes the sofa and living room as 'quiet', 'shady' and 'soft'. How else could you describe them? (p.22)
- If you were a fur seal and you saw humans for the first time, how might you describe them? (p.24)
- How do you think you would react if you saw a fur seal asleep on your sofa? (p.24)
- What would be one of the main reasons a fur seal would return to the sea? (p.27)
- Do you think it is more dangerous for a fur seal to be in the sea or in the city? Explain your answer. (p.27)
- How do you think Kekeno feels about being home? How do you feel when you get home? (pp.28–29)

### SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ACTIVITIES



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

# Activities

## ACTIVITY 1: A SEAL SILHOUETTE

Mother fur seals leave their pups while they go to catch fish. The first fishing trips generally last one or two days. As the pup gets older, the fishing trips last longer. Create a silhouette picture that shows the mother fur seal diving in the blue sea to hunt for fish. For a silhouette picture, you need a black piece of paper, a white piece of paper, blue paint, white paint, glue, scissors, a paintbrush and a pencil. Firstly, paint the white piece of paper to create the sea. You can mix the white paint into the blue paint to create different shades of blue. You could also use a sponge to dab on the white and blue paints to make a textured look. Let the paint dry. On the black piece of paper, draw the mother fur seal swimming, some fish, seaweed and some rocky outcrops. Cut these shapes out. Use the book as a drawing guide. For example, page 1 features a fur seal swimming. Glue the cut-out black shapes onto the blue painted paper. Display your finished silhouette pictures on a classroom wall.

## ACTIVITY 2: A POD OF PUPS

Every summer, fur seals gather in breeding colonies along some of the coastlines of Aotearoa New Zealand. While the mother fur seals are at sea hunting, the pups gather in groups, or pods. They spend a lot of time playing in rock pools to learn to swim and to develop their strength and agility. Create a pod of pups among the rock pools using an egg carton and light card. Firstly, paint the half of the egg carton that has the pointy cups. The bottom of that egg carton half could be painted blue to represent the blue water of the rock pools. Then paint the cups or pointy parts of the egg carton black to represent the rocks. Scrunch up and place blue crepe paper to create some more water and black crepe paper to create some additional rocks. Draw a pod of pups onto light card. Use the illustrations on pages 6 and 11 to help you. Cut out the paper pups and glue them onto ice-block sticks or paper straws. Then place them in or around the rock pools. Use either glue or sticky tape to attach them to the egg carton. Display your rock pool and pod creations around the classroom.

## ACTIVITY 3: WATCH OUT!

At the bottom of page 31, there are suggestions about what to do – or not to do – if you come across a fur seal on the land. Design and create a warning sign that alerts people about the dangers of approaching a fur seal. Warning signs are often done in colours such as black and yellow or red, white and black. They can have a heading such as ‘Warning!’ or ‘Watch Out!’ and a stylised icon image of the danger, such as a fur seal. You could write the four suggestions that the author wrote in the boxed text on page 31 under your heading or image. Work alone or in pairs. Share your work with the rest of the class.

## ACTIVITY 4: WHO EATS WHOM?

Animals in the wild can be prey, predators or both. Fur seals eat a wide variety of fish, squid and sometimes octopus. Sharks such as great white sharks sometimes eat fur seals. Draw and label an ocean food chain. A food chain describes who eats whom in the wild and shows how energy passes from one living thing to another. A food chain always starts with light from the sun and then a producer such as a plant. Your food chain diagram could be circular and feature the following in this order: the sun, a plant such as seaweed, a fish, a squid, a fur seal and a great white shark. Draw an arrow between each ‘link’ in the chain. You could add labels and numerals to your diagram, such as ‘1. Sunlight’ and so on. Then display your completed food chains.

## ACTIVITY 5: HALF AND HALF

Fur seals can sleep in the water with half of their brain asleep and the other half awake and alert to breathe and detect predators. Imagine that you can go about your day with half of your brain asleep and half of your brain awake. When would you use that feature? Draw a large outline of your head and brain and divide your brain in half. Then draw you asleep in the part of the brain that is asleep. In the awake part of your brain, draw what you would like to be doing. You can pretend to be you or a fur seal. Share your work with a friend.

Written by Janine Scott