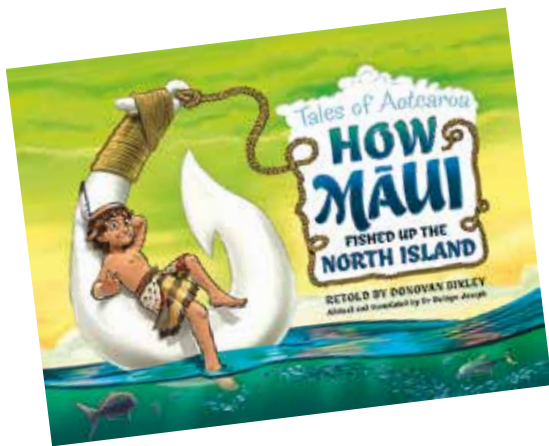


How Maui Fished up the North Island



Retold by Donovan Bixley, Advised by Dr Darryn Joseph, Translated by Dr Darryn Joseph and Keri Opai, Published by Upstart Press Ltd

Topics for Discussion

How Māui Fished up the North Island is targeted at four- to eight-year-olds. Below is a list of topics and their associated information that can be adapted to different age groups.

Activities

Te Reo Māori

Can you find all the words in the book in te reo Māori? What does each word mean?

ao – cloud

hoe – paddle

ika – fish

ika nui rawa – the biggest fish of all

ka mau te wehi – it's awesome

ka mutu pea – the end, maybe

kaimoana – seafood

karakia – blessing

kete – basket

kia kaha – be strong

matau – hook

papakāinga – village

pōtiki – youngest child

punga – anchor

tama iti – little boy

taonga – treasure

tinihanga – trickster

waka – canoe

wheke – octopus

Birds

Can you find these birds in the book? How do the birds help fishermen like Māui and his brothers?



amokura – red-tailed tropicbird

These birds have long red tail feathers that are about twice the length of their body. They eat mostly flying fish and squid, which they catch by diving into the sea.



kōtaha – great frigatebird

The male and female birds are very different – the female is larger and has a white throat and chest, the male has a bright red sac under its beak that can blow up like a balloon. Their wingspan is over 2 metres!



tākapu – gannet

Gannets are great divers. They can reach speeds of up to 100km/h before they hit the water. So that they can dive and swim well underwater, their nostrils are inside their mouth!

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fruit dove

Fruit doves are found on many Pacific islands. They are often very colourful. They eat (you guessed it!) fruit.



blue-faced booby

This bird is white with a darker coloured face – so it is often called the Masked Booby. They are also great divers and can dive down to 3 metres.



matuku-moana – reef heron

These are not seabirds, they catch small fish and shellfish while wading in the reef. Herons have very long necks, but tuck them in when they are flying – you can see this on page 8.

In Aotearoa: kiwi, ruru, kea, Fiordland crested penguin (tawaki), moa, Haast's eagle (pouākai)

Pacific fishermen followed sea birds, such as kōtaha and amokura, far out to sea, where these blue water fishing birds led them to huge schools of fish. With their waka full, the fishermen could follow the long trail of birds back to land, even when it was far beyond the horizon.

Stars

Can you find any stars in the book? What is the name of these stars?

Look out for Matariki (Pleiades), Takurua (Sirius) and Māhutonga (Southern Cross). These stars would help Māui find his way back to Hawaiki after he fished up Aotearoa. You can find Takurua easily to the right of the Orion constellation – which is known as Te Kakau a Māui: the handle of Māui's oar.

Waka

How many times does a waka appear in the book?

Māui hides in his brothers' fishing canoe – a small and speedy waka with an outrigger. This means that a small canoe is attached to a larger canoe – it stops the waka from tipping over, especially far out to sea where there are really big waves. This type of waka is called a 'waka ama'. It can be paddled as well as sailed.

Hawaiki

Māui sets off from Hawaiki. Where is this place?

Hawaiki is the ancestral and spiritual home of Māori. Most people think that Hawaiki is Ra'iātea in Tahiti. This means Māui and his brothers travelled over 4000 kilometres!

Maui's Place Names

See if you can draw a map of New Zealand with the North Island as Maui's fish and the South Island as his waka. You can mark in some of these places . . .

Ngā Karu-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The eyes of Māui's fish/Wellington Harbour & Lake Wairarapa

Te Ūpoko-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The head of Māui's fish/Wellington

Te Pito-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The navel of Māui's fish/Lake Taupo

Te Matau-a-Māui/Māui's hook/Mahia Peninsula

Te Pākau-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The fins of Māui's fish/Taranaki & East Coast

Te Manawa-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The heart of Māui's fish/Mt Te Urewera

Te Hiku-o-Te-Ika-a-Māui/The tail of Māui's fish/Far North

As you can see, lots of things are named after Māui! He even has a dinosaur named after him – the Mauisaurus (New Zealand plesiosaur).

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Drawing emotions

Look at Maui's face in every picture – can you tell what he's thinking and feeling? Here's how to draw some emotions; can you draw some too?



Background

Initially I turned down the opportunity to retell Māui's story, for lack of any cultural credibility. But the more I thought about it, the more I was drawn to Māui. A lot of my books are bright and humorous stories for pre-schoolers and young readers. I wanted to bring Māui's story to these New Zealanders. But first I needed someone with mana to help me.

Luckily I bumped into Dr Darryn Joseph (Ngāti Maniapoto) at a children's book hui. We got on well and I discovered that not only was Darryn a Senior Lecturer of Māori at Massey University, he was also an award-winning writer of teen sci-fi novels in te reo, as well as being a judge for the New Zealand Children's Book Awards.

I tentatively showed Darryn some of my imaginative early scribbles. I was concerned, because in my version, Māui is not a buffed-up man, instead he's the youngest and smallest brother, out on a funny family fishing trip. One sketch featured Māui and his brothers setting off in a war canoe from his fortified pa at the top of the South Island. I was thrilled when Darryn approved of my child-centred humorous approach, but he pointed out that Māui should not be paddling a waka taua, and he's definitely not fishing up the North Island from his base in the South Island, as I'd drawn it. Obviously, Darryn explained, Aotearoa doesn't exist until Māui fishes it up. It seems really simple once you say it.

Over the months, Darryn and I talked about Māui, and my eyes were opened to some of the deeper meaning and symbolism behind the legend, as well as many of the historic connections.

I've set this version of Māui's legend somewhere between myth and history. Where Hawaiki is mixed with recognisable Māori elements, such as moko, piupiu and papakāinga. Aotearoa pops into being with a comic book 'boing' — a fully formed land complete with giant birds and huge kauri forests. In Māori thinking, Aotearoa should be shown upside down to the European way of looking at the world.

My conversations with Darryn opened my eyes to all sorts of aspects of the Pacific voyages and I hope you too find many things to discover and talk about within these pages. Children will easily see great differences between Hawaiki and Aotearoa but look deeper for the places where Māui earns some of his names. Take note of the special location where Māui's waka makes landfall in Aotearoa or spot the bored little boy who invents the string game Te Whai Wawewawe a Māui, whilst tangled in his fishing line.

With the guidance of Dr Darryn Joseph I've tried to honour the spiritual and cultural impact of Māui, but also to show that wonderful Māori sense of humour — the Māui who is pōtiki, youngest scrawny brother, and tinihanga, the cheeky trickster — the ancestor of all the hilarious Māori boys I went to primary school with.