



Didymo awareness campaign

December 2008 – February 2009
Actions and recommendations

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Publication date April 2009
Publication No. GW/BIO-G-09/60

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1. Background

1.1 *Didymosphenia geminata* – what is it?

“*Didymo* (*Didymosphenia geminata*) (known as “rock snot”), is a freshwater diatom (a type of algae). It is native to northern Europe and North America and was first reported in New Zealand in 2004. *Didymo* is currently found in a number of South Island rivers.

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) has since declared the entire South Island a ‘Controlled Area’ for *Didymo*. This means waterways remain open to angling and other recreational activities. You must clean your gear and equipment when going from one waterway to another in the South Island and before entering the North Island also.

The alga can form massive blooms on the bottom of streams, rivers and lakes. It attaches itself to the stream bed by stalks, and can form a thick brown layer that smothers rocks and aquatic plants. It forms flowing ‘rats tails’ that can turn white at their ends and resemble toilet paper. As the ‘tails’ of the alga get longer they become white in colour.

This microscopic pest can be spread by a single drop of water, even if you can’t see it, you could be spreading it.”¹

1.2 *Didymo* awareness campaign

The Biosecurity Department Pest Plant Section applied for funds from MAFBNZ to support our annual programme to raise awareness and maintain surveillance for this species. Staff within the Pest Plant Section focused on delegated tasks to ensure high levels of awareness and response capability are delivered from the allocated funds from both MAFBNZ and Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington).

MAF Biosecurity New Zealand provided funding (\$20K) for the employment of two *Didymo* Marketing Advocates to undertake *Didymo* marketing and awareness work in the Wellington and Wairarapa for a period of 12 weeks over December 2008 to February 2009.

The main focus of this campaign was to educate river users, retailers, relevant clubs and the general public about the risks *Didymo* poses to our environmental, recreational, commercial and cultural values. Greater Wellington has also integrated an aquatic pest awareness campaign to run alongside the summer *Didymo* campaign.

Staff delegated tasks in the programme from Greater Wellington were:

¹ MAF Biosecurity New Zealand, *Protect Our Waterways* brochure.

- Richard Grimmett, Senior Biosecurity Officer (Pest Plants). Duties within the National Coordination Group were:
 - To inform of activities in the stakeholder group area
 - Gather information and deliver to the Lower North Island Stakeholder Group
 - Development of the Response Plan with stakeholders for LNI.
 - Co-ordinate interagency activity and communication for Greater Wellington
 - Develop the Greater Wellington Response Plan.
 - Manage annual regional activity.
- Wayne Cowan and Benjamin Winder, Biosecurity Officers:
 - Planned and delivered advocacy and communication activity from Masterton and Upper Hutt Depots
 - Managed daily activities of advocates.
- Jim Flack, Senior Communications Officer:
 - Developed communications of all types for all staff at a range of levels.
- Mark McAlpine in Wellington and Sam O'Donnell in Wairarapa were on fixed term contracts:
 - Actively delivering information and advice to the entire range of people in contact with fresh water.
- Thane Walls, River Ranger Hutt River:
 - Delivering advice and information during daily patrol activities.
- Parks & Forests staff:
 - Delivered advice and information from contact at offices and onsite staff during daily contact
 - Informed permit applicants and concessioners'.
- Alton Perrie, Fresh Water Scientist:
 - Collected samples and provided identification expertise.

This report outlines the actions undertaken throughout the greater Wellington region by staff over the course of this summer campaign; and includes recommendations for further awareness campaigns.

2. Tasks undertaken

2.1 Signs

The continued placement of signage at popular waterway access points took place in collaboration with Department of Conservation (DoC), Fish and Game and local land owners. The introduction of the new metal and perspex signs has limited the amount of vandalism. During the course of the campaign, 85 signs were placed throughout the greater Wellington region; 44 in the Wairarapa and 41 in Wellington². Refer to figure 1.

Figure 1



2.2 Mail out

A mail merge was put together in early January 2009 to provide information to four key river user groups, (clubs, accommodation, tourism operators and contractors). This mail out resulted in 230 packs being sent out. Each pack sent consisted of the following material:³

² Full list of sign locations, refer 4.1

³ Full mail out list, refer 4.2

- **Clubs** - 15 plastic information packs, 10 checked, cleaned, dried stickers and a DVD
- **Accommodation** - 10 brochures and 5 pocket cleaning guides
- **Tourism Operators** - 10 brochures and 5 pocket cleaning guides
- **Contractors** - 10 brochures

2.3 Sites visited

Key river access points were routinely visited within the region. River users and campers were spoken to about Didymo and information packs were given out. Visits occurred during peak times when the public were on water bodies, such as evenings, weekends and public holidays.

Parks & Forests and Flood Protection Rangers were kitted with information folders and hand outs. They actively delivered the “Check, Clean and Dry” (CCD) message to people they had contact with.

Time was spent talking to people in the shopping streets of towns to gauge awareness and provide information.

2.4 Events attended

The following events have been attended over the course of the campaign:

- Greytown – Greentown promotion display stand in Town Hall
- The Home to Pub Multisport Event in both Wellington and Wairarapa
- World Barefoot Ski Champs at Forest Lakes
- Karapoti Classic with DoC
- World Jet Sprint Champs held at Tauherenikau
- Holdsworth Jumbo Trail Race
- Wairarapa Multisport Club Kayak Series.
- Masterton A&P Show display and staff attendance
- Carterton A&P Show display and staff attendance
- Kapiti Lifestyles Show display and staff attendance

While at these events/shows displays were set up, information was offered to both event participants and spectators. Events were generally covered by Biosecurity Officers and the advocates, but varied depending on the location and scale of the event.

2.5 Posters

The majority of posters were erected in the Wairarapa. They were put up in petrol stations, selected dairies, buses, bars, motels, supermarkets and sports shops. The majority of public transport providers had poster spaces fully booked out for summer events advertising during the campaign resulting in only two Wairarapa bus companies being able to display posters.

2.6 New initiatives

In an effort to get more information out to the public, two new information holders were used over the campaign. The brochure holder was a mix of the following material, brochures, bumper stickers, “How to Check, Clean and Dry” pocket book and Didymo pens. Refer to figure 2. The brochure stands were placed at the front desk in sporting shops, district council buildings, libraries, rental car outlets and information centres.⁴

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

The business card holder sat on top of an existing Didymo sign. Refer to figure 3. In the case of Mikimiki and Mt Holdsworth Regional Parks it was at their information shelter. Refer to figure 4. Each plastic card holder is able to hold 20 “How to Check, Clean and Dry” pocket books. The aim of this was to allow the public access to information, even when staff were not present onsite. These were regularly restocked and proved popular.⁵



⁴ List of brochure stand locations, refer 4.3

⁵ List of card holder locations, refer 4.3

2.7 Media

This year the campaign managed to get information onto the Greater Wellington webpage and ratepayer leaflet mail outs, the front page of the Wairarapa Times Age and an advertisement on the radio (for an extended period before and after school holidays through to mid March).⁶

2.8 Environmental Education to Schools

Information packs were made available to staff from our Environmental Education Department. The information will be included in presentations and programmes run with schools and other groups.

2.9 Staff Awareness

The Didymo Management and Response Plan Draft was completed and initial steps have been taken to ensure that staff understand the CCD process. Information is displayed in offices.

3. Feedback and recommendations

3.1 Effectiveness

There is no doubt that having staff onsite to talk to river users is highly effective at getting the CCD message across. However, due to resource limitations, officers could not be everywhere all the time. This issue was addressed to a certain degree in the Wairarapa with “How to Check, Clean and Dry” information being placed in business card holders at nine popular river sites. This could be expanded to include more sites.

It is also difficult to convey the seriousness of the situation with a few pictures and words, as some river users spoken to thought that because they had heard of Didymo they did not require further information. Having the ability to show video footage such as the Fish and Game DVD would be useful. This could potentially be done through television and/or a portable viewing device.

Media could be utilised more to spread the message. Depending on staff time this could be done through sources such as Greater Wellington’s “Our Region”, web pages, magazines and newspapers.

Using media along with other mediums such as posters on buses can be a low cost effective way of reaching a wide audience. However, booking in advance is crucial as there is often competition for poster space over the summer period.

An example could be target an infomercial type article to television via a MAFBNZ approach, to say “Campbell Live”, and give a hard hitting update on this pest march up the country.

⁶ Publications in full, refer 4.4

Information and letters were sent to relevant clubs. The letters offered the clubs an opportunity for the Greater Wellington Didymo staff to visit and speak at club nights or events. There were no responses to these offers. Whether the lack of response was due to a high level of awareness already present, or a lack of interest is unclear. The club mail out included the MAFBNZ Didymo DVD for viewing at club nights.

3.2 Public relations

Public reactions to staff presence on the rivers has been positive. A large percentage of river users had already heard of Didymo through MAFBNZ staff at ferries and other campaigns. Although they were aware of Didymo, most people were not aware of its impacts or what to do about it. Most people were interested in learning more and were happy to take further information.

The small percentage that had a negative response tended to have a perception that prevention was a waste of time as the spread of Didymo was unstoppable.

Unfortunately the presence of the toxic blue/green algae meant fewer people were using the rivers during February to March. It also created quite a bit of confusion when discussing Didymo as a lot of people thought we were talking about the toxic algae.

3.3 Events

Attending events proved to be an effective way of reaching a large captive audience. Didymo messages could be included in the Greater Wellington Outdoor Programme 2008/09 and information given out at relevant events.

David Moss (DoC staff member) is working with Greater Wellington staff to cover two upcoming mountain bike events in March as they occur after the Didymo marketing campaign finishes.

For future events on Greater Wellington land it is recommended to organise a meeting with the event organiser, DoC and Greater Wellington staff well ahead of the event commencing.

In the future Didymo cleaning should be a condition of relevant concessions on Greater Wellington land to include events such as the Karapoti Classic, Eastbourne Rogaine and Big Coast.

3.4 National organisations

Some organisations that were approached locally such as Kathmandu and Caltex were unable to display information without consulting management. This may be a similar problem with other organisations such as national vehicle hire companies. It was suggested to MAFBNZ that these organisations be approached by them due to the national scale. This included contacting national accommodation associations.

4. Appendix

4.1 Sign locations

Ruamahanga River	Double Bridges (reserve)
Ruamahanga River	Double Bridges (boat access)
Ruamahanga River	Te Hopai Rd
Ruamahanga River	Percy Reserve (Boat ramp)
Ruamahanga River	Percy Reserve (Pedestrian)
Ruamahanga River	The Cliffs
Ruamahanga River	Pah Rd
Ruamahanga River	Pahautea Rd
Ruamahanga River	Kokatau Bridge
Ruamahanga River	SH53 Martinborough Bridge
Ruamahanga River	East West Access Rd
Ruamahanga River	East West Access Rd (Boat Club)
Ruamahanga River	Foreman Jury Road
Ruamahanga River	Morrison's Bush
Ruamahanga River	Oliver's Rd Access
Ruamahanga River	Gladstone Bridge (angler access)
Ruamahanga River	Gladstone Bridge (4WD access)
Ruamahanga River	Wardell's Bridge
Waiohine River	SH2 Bridge
Waiohine River	SH2 Bridge other side
Waiohine River	Waiohine Gorge Carpark
Waiohine River	(Before DoC land) Pedestrian
Waiohine River	Kuratawhiti St Rd end
Waipoua River	Opposite Masterton Fire Station
Waipoua River	Behind Skate Park
Waipoua River	Colombo Rd Bridge
Whareama River	Boat Ramp
Waingawa River	South Rd
Waingawa River	Skeets Rd
Waingawa River	Cornwall Rd (river access)
Tauherenikau	Racecourse River Boat Access
Tauherenikau River	Donald's Rd Angler Access
Tauherenikau River	Underhill Rd
Lake Ferry	Park Boat Ramp
Lake Ferry	Park Further Down (white baiters)
Kourarau Dam	Kourarau Dam
Lake Wairarapa	Lake Domain Boat Ramp
Lake Wairarapa	Western Lake Rd (DOC Reserve)
Lake Wairarapa	In Domain
Henley lake	Boat Ramp
Henley lake	Pedestrian
Henley lake	River Access
Henley lake	Te Ore Ore Rd Access
Aorangi Forest Park	Haurangi Rd End
Otaki River	SH1 Bridge
Otaki River	SH1 Bridge

Otaki River	SH1 Bridge
Otaki River	Kaitawa Suspension Bridge
Otaki River	Kaitawa Suspension Bridge
Otaki River	Otaki Gorge Rd
Otaki River	Old Coach Rd
Otaki Folks	Otaki Folks Camping Ground
Forest Lakes	Forest Lakes Camping Ground
Waikanae River	Otaihanga Domain
Waikanae River	Greenaway Rd Access Point
Waikanae River	Nimmon Ave/ Jim Cook Memorial Park
Waikanae River	Edgewater Park.
Waikanae River	Reikorangi Rd/ Devils Elbow
Waikanae River	Mangone South Rd
Ngatiawa River	End of Ngatiawa Rd
Mangakotukutuku Stream	Mangakitokutuku Rd 4x4 Adventure.
Mangakotukutuku Stream	End of Manguakotukutuku Rd
Wainui Recreation Area	End of Reservoir Rd.
Orongorongo Valley/ Catchpool Stream	Orongorongo Valley/ Catchpool Stream
Kaitoke Regional Park	Main Car Park After Campground
Kaitoke Regional Park	Swimming Hole
Hutt River	Akatarawa rd access spot by bridge.
Hutt River	Ngatitama Park
Hutt River	Upper Poets Park
Hutt River	Poets Park
Hutt River	Moonshine Park
Hutt River	River Rd, Memorial Park
Hutt River	Silverstream Picnic Area
Hutt River	Access Point off Eastern Hutt Rd
Hutt River	Stokes Valley Round About
Hutt River	High St Park Area
Hutt River	Further Down High St Park
Hutt River	Melling Bridge
Hutt River	Marsden St
Hutt River	Harcourt Werry
Hutt River	Upper Harcourt Werry Park
Hutt River	North of Kennedy Good bridge
Hutt River	Past Gravel Piles

4.2 Mail out

Clubs

Wairarapa Paddlers
 Wairarapa Multi-sport Club
 Land Rover Enthusiasts Club
 Wairarapa Four Wheel Drive Club
 Wairarapa Jet Sprint Club
 Off Road Wairarapa 4x4 Club

Deer Stalker Association
Wairarapa Pig Hunting Club
Wairarapa Powerboat Club
Ruamahunga Powerboat Club
Wairarapa Fish and Game Club
Wellington Fly Fishing Club
Hutt Valley Anglers Club
Kapiti Fly Fishing
Hutt Valley Course Fishing Club
Wellington Family 4X4 Club
Wellington Cross Country Vehicle Club
Wellington Jeep Club
Tararua 4x4 Club
Hutt Valley Canoe Club
Kupe Canoe Club
Victoria University Canoe Club
Hutt Multi Sport Club
Jet Boating NZ
Kapiti Deerstalkers
Wellington Deerstalkers
Hutt Valley Deerstalkers
Porirua Deerstalkers
Hutt Valley Tramping Club
Tararua Tramping Club
Plimmerton Boating Club Inc
Upper Hutt Cossie Club Fishing Club
New Zealand Federation of Course Anglers

Motels / Hotels / Campgrounds

Matador Motel
Oak Estate Motor Lodge
Claremont Motel
Acorn Estate Motel
Amble Inn Motel
Best Western Masterton Motor Lodge
Colonial Cottage Motel
Cornwall Park Motel
Discovery Motor Lodge
South Park Motel
The Highwayman Motel
Chardonnay Motor Lodge
Cophthorne Resort Solway Park

Carterton Holiday Park
Castlepoint Holiday Park
Mawley Park Campgrounds
Martinborough Village Camping
Chanel Court Motel
Lake Ferry Campground
Rowena's City Lodge
Capital View Motor Inn
Spinnaker Motel
Central @ Terrace Heights Serviced Apartments
Quest On Johnston
Aotea Lodge
Settlers Motor Lodge
Airport Motor Lodge
Wellington Top 10 Holiday Park
Ocean Motel
Victoria Court Motor Lodge
Quest At St Pauls Apartments
Halswell Lodge Hotel/Motel
The Angus Inn Hotel
Cambridge Hotel & Backpackers
Bucket Tree Motor Lodge
Central City Apartment Hotel
Apollo Lodge Motel
Central @ Terrace Heights Serviced Apartments
Quality Hotel On Thorndon
Marksman Motor Inn
Cophorne Hotel Wellington
Quest On The Terrace
Hotel Willis Lodge
Abel Tasman Hotel
James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor
Finn's Paekakariki
Quest Wellington
Rosemere Backpackers
Champers Motor Inn
Southgate Motor Inn
Amethyst Court Motor Lodge
Central @ Stratford Apartment Hotel
World Wide Backpackers
Kingsgate Hotel Portland,
Quest Atrium
Capital Gateway
Bella Vista Wellington

Ascot Motor Lodge
Belmont Motor Lodge
Cophthorne Hotel Wellington, Plimmer Towers
Base Wellington
Quest On Willis
Just Hotel
Quest On Gilmer
Brentwood Hotel
Glen Alton Motel
Adelaide Motel
Majoribanks Apartments
Waikanae Beach Motel
Foreshore Motor Lodge
Harbour City Motor Inn
Totara Lodge Motor Inn
Hawk's Inn Motel
Trentham Motel
Fernhill Motor Lodge
Johnsonville Motor Lodge
Tinakori Lodge
747 Motel
Airport Motel
88 Wallace Court Motel
Capital City Lodge
Copperfield Seaside Motel
Abbeycourt Motel
Midway Pacifica Lodge
The Richmond Guest House
Newlands Court Motel
Harcourt Holiday Park
Wellington Motels
West Plaza Hotel
Lodge In The City
The Bay Plaza Hotel
Villa Melina
Bristol Motel
Downtown Backpackers©
Hutt City Motel
Archibald Apartments
Admiral's Breakfast B&B Apartment
Honda House
Camp Elsdon
Motel 22
Jade Court Motel

YHA Wellington City
Novella
Marina Motor Lodge
Tranquility Home Stay
Green Gables Motel
Karaka Bay Homestay
Camellia Court Motel
Holiday Inn Wellington
Comfort Hotel Wellington
Novotel Capital Wellington
Duxton Hotel Wellington
Luxford Inn

Tourism Operators

McLeods Quad Adventures
Wet n Wild Adventure Tours
Kahutara Canoes
Professional Guiding Services Ltd
Patuna Farm Adventures
The Tararua Walk & Mt Bruce Experience
Wildside Walks
Kawakawa Station Walk
The Adventure Centre
Wharekauhau Country Estate
Captivate Adventures
Cat tours
Eco Tours Wellington Limited
Kapiti 4x4 Adventure Ltd
Mud Cycles Karori
Top Adventures
Makahika Outdoor Pursuits Centre
Heli-Flight
Capital Air
Helipro
New Zealand Adventure Specialists
Hang Dog Adventures
Kapiti Tours
Dynamic Tours

Eeling

Graham Higginson
Matt Paku

Drainage & Associated Contractors

Neil Croskery
Andrew Griffith
David James Contracting
Dingo Nick
Malneek Contractors
Turners Contractors
Rural Excavators Ltd
Hooper Contracting Ltd
Dean Wilkinson
Peter Morgan
Oldfields Aggregates Ltd
Fitzgerald Bulldozing Contractors
Tinui Contractors
Doyle & Buchanan Earthmovers Ltd
Everson Earthmovers
Bruce Buchanan Ltd
Geoffery Wilkinson
Lansdowne Nursery
Paterson Earthmoving Ltd
Dirt'ee Deeds Contracting Ltd
Colin Eastwood
Wylie Contracting
Dave Warren Earthmoving Ltd
Kwik Dig
Parkers Contracting
Ramsay Earthmoving
Quin Contracting
Smithy's Property Maintenance
Levin Eel Trading Company Limited
Daniel Renshaw Drainage Contractor Ltd
Riverside Landscaping Ltd
Antcliff Landscape Architects
Middleditch Design & Developments Ltd
Crosshill Developments Ltd
Multi Civil Contractors Ltd
Brian Simpson Contracting
McMud Earthworks
JPM Landscaping
Earthwork Landscape Architects

M & M Property Developments Limited
Ducks Unlimited NZ Inc
Phoenix Landscaping Products Ltd
Plimmerton Landscaping Supplies
Alexander Contracting Co Ltd
Morgan Contractors Ltd
K Woollett Landscape Construction
Groundbreakers Landscaping
Grange Gardens Landscaping Ltd
Kapital Irrigation and Landscaping
Chris George Landscaping

4.3 Information

Posters

The Lake Dairy
The Hospital Dairy
Mobil Petrol Station Masterton North
Caltex Petrol Station Masterton North
Mobil Petrol Station Masterton South
Caltex Petrol Station Masterton South
Transit Bus Lines
Wairarapa Coachlines
Mobil Petrol Station Carterton
GAS Petrol Station Carterton
Mobil Petrol Station Greytown
Greytown Community Supermarket
Mobil Petrol Station Featherston
BP Petrol Station Martinborough

Brochure Stands

Hunting & Fishing
King & Henry
Masterton District Council
Masterton Library
Masterton Information Centre
The Lott Rentals
Cross Country Rentals
Graeme Jones Car Rental
Carterton District Council
Carterton Library
Carterton Information Centre
Collings and Bradey, Hunting and Outdoor Supplies
Greytown Library
Information Centre
Featherston Library
Featherston Information Centre

South Wairarapa District Council
Martinborough Library
Martinborough Information Centre
Upper Hutt Library
Upper Hutt City Council
Lower Hutt City Council
Wellington City Council
Wellington Library
Kapiti Coast District Council
Paraparaumu Library
Waikanae Library

Business Card Holders

Henley Lake
Mikimiki
Mt Holdsworth
Waiohine Gorge
Kourarau Dam
Lake Domain
Western Lake Rd
Te Hopai Rd
The Diversion

4.4 Publications



Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring our environment is protected, while meeting the economic, social and cultural needs of the community.



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23 December

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22 December

Imagine a thick layer of brown snotty material covering the rocks at your favourite river swimming hole or your fishing line being weighed down by a mass of snot like material at your favourite ...

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Didymo campaign under way

By **NATHAN CROMBIE**
nchiefrep@age.co.nz

The line was drawn in Masterton yesterday against the river-killer didymo that can spread through a single drop of tainted water.

"Didymo is already fouling many of the South Island's iconic rivers and it will only be vigilance on the part of all water users that will stop the same thing happening here," Richard Grimmitt, Greater Wellington Regional Council Masterton senior biosecurity officer, said. Didymo, also known as rock-snot, has not been found in the North Island but is an invasive microscopic organism that forms massive blooms on the bottom of streams, rivers and lakes, he said. Didymo attaches itself by stalks to the streambed and can form a thick brown layer that smothers rocks, submerged plants and other material and often forms long flowing 'rats' tails' that can break off and flow downstream "looking and feeling similar to toilet paper". Mr Grimmitt said the tiniest piece of didymo has the

potential to grow, spread and foul an entire river system.

"It's a microscopic pest that becomes a monster and can be spread by a single drop of water. Even if you can't see it, you could be spreading it."

"Much will rely on people using South Island rivers following the check, clean, dry message before traveling to the North Island. However, the really worrying aspect is that it could already be in the North Island, but is yet to be detected." "With that in mind the best way to protect our waterways from this pest and others is to pretend that they are already here and adopt a simple practice to stop them from spreading."

Mr Grimmitt said the way to stop spreading aquatic weeds like didymo is to check, clean and dry all your gear after leaving the water and before you enter again.

"Check all your gear for traces of aquatic weeds when you leave a waterway and before you enter another one. Gear can be a boat, boat trailer, boots, fishing gear, nets or anything else that you take into the water. Check it, clean it and dry it, before you

enter another waterway."

"You only have to see Henley Lake to understand what sort of problems aquatic weeds can cause."

Greater Wellington Regional Council has two officers working over summer to spread the message of "check, clean and dry" to waterway users across the region.

The pair will visit popular river spots around the region, he said, to advise and discuss defenses against the spread of outlaw aquatic weeds. The officers will be delivering awareness material around clubs and retailers as well as posting signs at popular swimming and boating spots, he said.

Greater Wellington Regional Council monitor water samples for didymo from the Tauherenikau, Waiohine, Waingawa, Rasmahanga, Hutt, Orongorongo, Waikanae and Otaki rivers.

Water monitoring officers "keep a watchful eye" for any telltale signs when working in waterways throughout the region, Mr Grimmitt said.

For more information on didymo visit www.biosecurity.govt.nz.



NATHAN CROMBIE, Wairarapa Times Age reporter, stands in the Waipara River holding one of the signs being put up in the region.