

The cicada kid

Did you know that New Zealand has at least 42 different types of cicada? Olly Hills, 10, from Hamilton loves cicadas so much he has written a book to help people identify them.

By his mum **Tara Hills**.

Olly has always been very interested in insects – and cicadas in particular. When he was young, I would lift him up into trees so he could catch cicadas. The next summer, he would drag a chair over to whichever tree had cicadas on to catch them and then finally he was big enough to climb trees himself.

Olly would often ask me what type of cicada it was that he had caught. I would usually tell him it was a chorus cicada if it was large, or a northern snoring if it was small, as these were the only cicada names I knew!

I have caught several chorus cicadas in my life, and can only hear half the cicadas that Olly can hear (apparently I can't hear katydids either). I can only tell a few cicadas apart by sound, but simply don't notice this sort of stuff generally.

As Olly got older, I tried to find more information for him but found that everything was either in research papers or online, neither of which he could easily access. The book was born after Olly said so many times that there needs to be a book about New Zealand cicadas.

Readers can learn all about clapping cicadas, screaming cicadas, snoring cicadas, braying cicadas, and even yodelling ones! Olly's 115-page book allows us to enter their world and includes full colour photographs, maps, and detailed descriptions to help identify them.

Olly, who is a member of the Kiwi Conservation Club in Hamilton, says: "I'm interested in all insects, as well as birds, frogs, and lizards, and like to help out with local conservation projects."

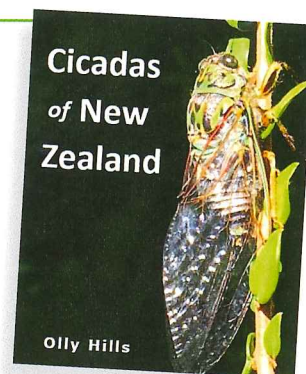


"I know other kids aren't as interested in insects as I am, but this doesn't make me think that insects are any less cool. I really like the fact that only children can hear the high-pitched cicadas. I think this makes people who can find these cicadas special."



Snoring cicada. Photo: Tom Musson

Forest & Bird thinks Olly is pretty special and a great KCC ambassador. You can buy *Cicadas of New Zealand* (RRP \$25) from www.fishpond.co.nz or through Olly's website www.nzcicada.co.nz. He'd love to talk cicadas with anyone interested – child, teenager, or adult!



KCC is 30 years young!

As part of our birthday celebrations, we've set a list of nature-based challenges. Complete them all in 2018 and go into our Grand Prize Draw for a weekend at Forest & Bird's Ruapehu Lodge (for up to six people) and a special KCC membership pack. Commit to a few challenges and still be in to win spot prizes galore. Download your copy at www.kcc.org.nz/activities to join us in the fun and learning.

