This traditional chant isn’t easily translated, because it is symbolic and metaphorical. The chant speaks about the harmony of the stars and the sea, and it includes the message that one must be diligent to succeed.

One interpretation says it is about the kiwi continuing to sit on its eggs even though two fern birds are lurking. Another interpretation, from a Tūhoe source, says the song is a star-counting chant that was recited when someone was waving a firebrand over crops to stop frost damage. The words speak of the harmony of the stars and the sea. The translation used above is only a guide.

Point out the dropping of pitch on the first word of the line.

It is an excellent chant for the whole class. Make it a class goal to be able to chant this without stopping.

Read “Tautora’s Bird Snare”, School Journal, Part 3 Number 3, 2007, which is a Māori story about the night sky.

The song sheets for all waiata and haka are at the back of this book.