

Getting sucked dry

The amount of water being extracted (taken from its source) in New Zealand, for things like irrigation (watering paddocks) and water bottling, is already large, but there are plans coming out all the time to take even more – millions, even billions, of litres more a year.

It's too much, too fast! It took ages for our fresh water to collect together in the first place, and nature has to put in lots of effort to maintain (keep up) the volume.



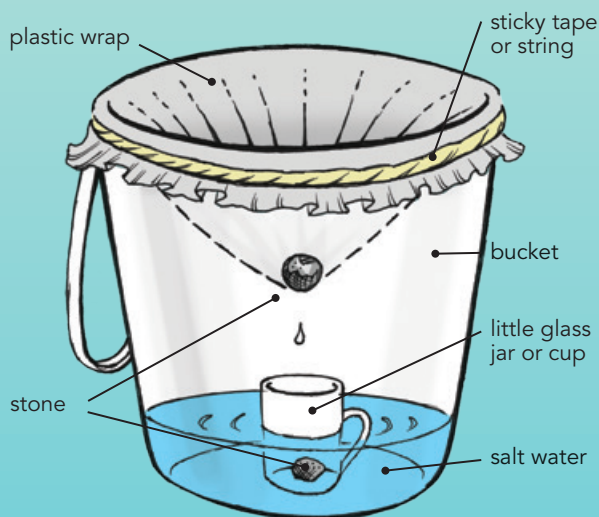
Pūpū Springs. Photo by Daniel Pietzsch (Flickr)

See for yourself...

*Want more explanation? Watch the video on our website.

What to do:

- Set up the experiment as the drawing below shows. Put the container in the sun.
- The next day, take off the plastic cover and look inside. The cup has water in it. Taste it, it's fresh. This is the water cycle in action.*
- Estimate how long it might take just to collect all the cups of water you drink in just one day. Remember to factor in that water usually stays in the atmosphere (on the plastic wrap) for 8–9 days, before falling as rain too.



Wild places are at risk!

Te Waikoropūpū Springs (or Pūpū Springs) are the largest cold water springs in the Southern Hemisphere, with some of the clearest waters in the world. It took 10 years for water that's there to bubble from the Arthur Marble Aquifer! They are home to species found nowhere else, and are wai tapu (sacred waters) for local iwi Ngāti Tama, Te Ātiawa, and Ngāti Rārua, because of the marble caves underneath.

Remember how rivers and groundwater are connected? If plans to take more water from the nearby Takaka catchment area go ahead, mainly for irrigation and other commercial (money-making) reasons, there is a real worry that the groundwater levels will get far too low. The stygofauna that live here, and make Te Waikoropūpū's waters so special, would die.

Forest & Bird thinks there should always be enough water for plants and animals. That's why we are fighting to stop over-extraction.

Water conservation (using water more wisely) will preserve our environment. **Sofia** (age 9) shares three ways she has thought of to save water on our website (kcc.org.nz). **Check it out!** Search "water".

