

# rusty's big adventure!



by Lauren Fletcher



**Hamilton** City Council

Te kaunihera o Kirikiriroa





“EEEWWW YUK!!!!” said the Kokopu<sup>u</sup> as he swam slowly through all the polluted water that was as dark as the trunk of an old Rimu tree.

Rusty was the name of the Kokopu. While swimming he kept saying over and over that “humans are doing this to the water”. It was then Rusty decided to go on an adventure to find clean, fresh water to save the fish from being poisoned. He started his adventure by swimming for days and days through yucky, slimy, polluted water which made him groan ... “I don’t feel so good”.



The Kokopu is a New Zealand native fish that lives in the Waikato River and gully system in Hamilton. However, if we continue to pollute our waterways, the Kokopu will either have to find a new place to live or will die.



EEEWWWW YUK!





Koura, insects, toebiters, earwigs and spiders are what Rusty enjoyed eating, but there wasn't much left because of all the pollution around. He could hear his own stomach grumbling. "I need something to eat" he cried with stomach pain! Rusty wondered if humans knew that most of the Giant Kokopus are endangered because of all the pollution. He also wished that more humans would walk or take the bus to stop it happening.

Did you realise that the same water that existed on earth millions of years ago is still being recycled around the planet today? The water you cleaned your teeth with this morning could contain a water molecule that was drunk by a dinosaur millions of years ago. WOW!

Water is a key part of our daily lives. In our homes we use water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, flushing the toilet, watering the garden and washing.

While on his big adventure to find fresh water, Rusty gulped mouthfuls along the way. “Hmm,” he said. “This mouthful tastes like clean, fresh, springwater ... Wait a second. I have found fresh water! YAY!” Suddenly, Rusty saw all the food a fish could eat and gobbled up slimy spiders, three earwigs and one tasty toebiter. “Gosh,” Rusty said. “My tummy feels so much better now. I can’t wait to get back home and bring my family back to this clean, fresh water.”




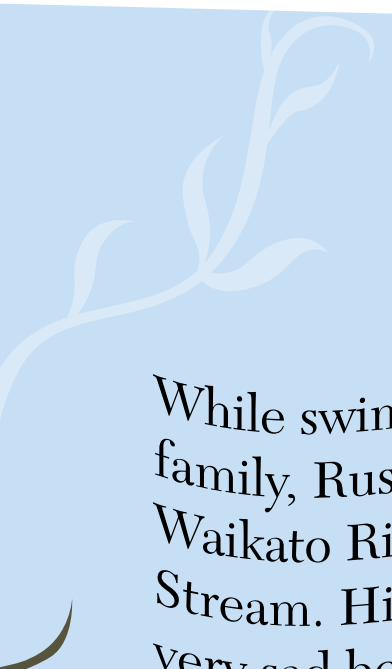


YAY!  
YAY! YAY!

ONLY RAIN  
GOES DOWN  
THE DRAIN!





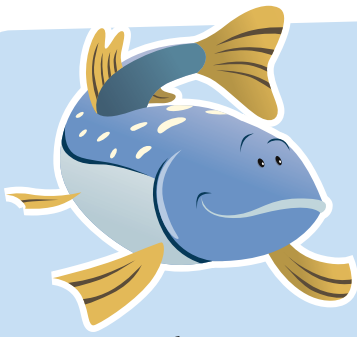


While swimming back to get his family, Rusty swam through the Waikato River and Kirikiriroa Stream. His journey made him very sad because he saw many unpleasant sights such as bottles, chip newspapers and saddest of all...dead fish!

It was then Rusty made up the motto “Only rain goes down the drain. Let’s keep it clean!”

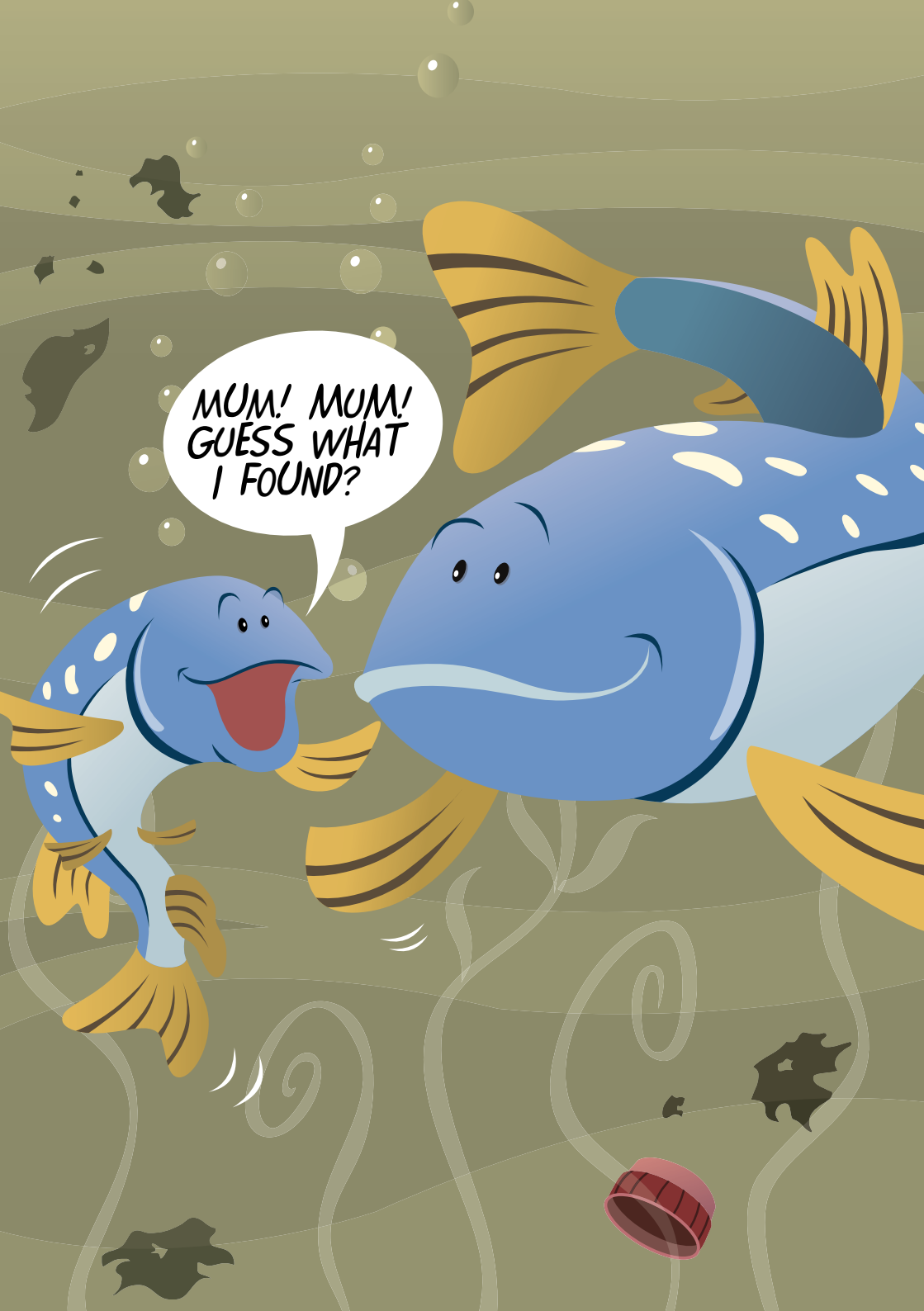


The Waikato River is important because it provides the water we use in our homes, schools, offices, gardens and farms. Fire fighters also use a lot of water to fight fires.



Rusty swam and swam and swam, eating tasty toebiter porridge for energy. It took him one week and three days to get home. When he got there he shouted “Mum! Mum!” “What?” she asked. “I have found fresh, clean water!” Mum was not happy and growled, “You should have told me where you were going.” “But Mum,” said Rusty. “Can I take you to the clean, fresh water now?” Mum looked at Rusty and said, “Okay then, because this water is as dark as chocolate.”

When it rains, water runs off Hamilton's roads, carparks and driveways and into the gutter and down the storm-water drains. This water then goes directly to our rivers and streams. That's why we have to keep it clean.



MUM! MUM!  
GUESS WHAT  
I FOUND?



NO!

NO!

NO!

Stormwater flows over paved areas and down our street gutters picking up everything that is in its way. All this rubbish can end up in the Waikato River.

So Rusty and his friends, Wilson and Dizzy, set off. Rusty's mum went with them. She had packed koura crackers and bread with tasty toebiters and earwigs as the spread. One week went by. They were so tired. "We need something to eat," they all groaned. "Look," said Dizzy enthusiastically. "Food!"

"No, Dizzy, don't eat that!" Too late, Dizzy had already eaten it. "I don't feel so good" Dizzy cried in pain.

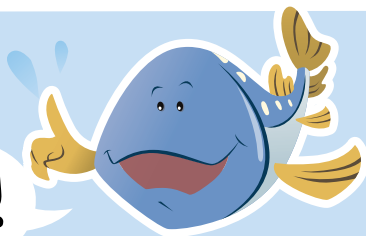
"You just ate paint that must have come from the drain," explained Rusty.

"My motto is 'only rain goes down the drain' and I don't think that is rain."



To keep our waterways clean, always wash your car on the lawn, never wash paints or chemicals down the stormwater drain, and make sure your rubbish always goes in a bin.

YAY!



“Come on,” said Rusty’s Mum.  
“We’ve got to get Dizzy to the clean, fresh water.” They all swam faster than a dolphin does when a shark is chasing it. “Come on Dizzy, wake up. We have found clean, fresh, water!” Dizzy woke up. “YAY! YAY! YAY!” everyone cheered. “We will all live happily every after, in the clean, fresh water.”



YAY!

FRESH  
WATER!

COOL!

YAY!

Stormwater drains are only for rain. If we look after our waterways our water will remain pollutant free and freshwater species like the Kokopu will continue to live in the Waikato River.

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by Lauren Fletcher



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Hamilton City Council's "Fish On Drains" campaign aims to generate awareness of the effects of stormwater pollution on our freshwater ecosystems, as well as give better recognition to the silver Kokopu which guard our city's drains.

We would like to sincerely thank Hukanui School student Lauren Fletcher who wrote this awesome story in support of our campaign. Lauren also provided much inspiration for the illustrations within and has proudly given our treasured silver guardians the name of "Rusty". So, next time you pass a city drain, look out for Rusty and remember, "stormwater drains are only for rain!"

For more information, visit [www.hamilton.co.nz](http://www.hamilton.co.nz) and search for "stormwater drains".

*With special thanks to*

