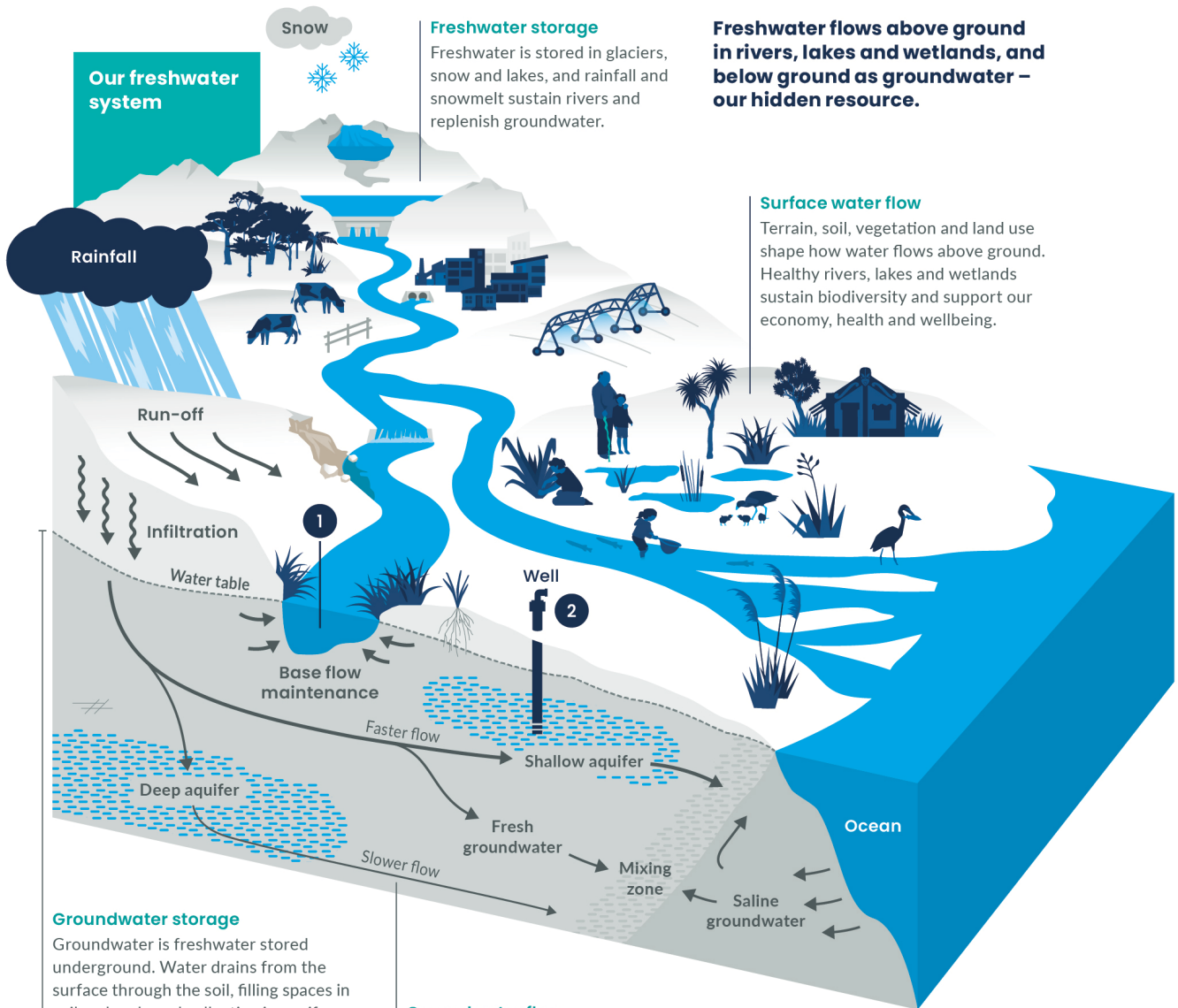


Our freshwater

Water moves through the landscape as a system, so changes in one place affect other areas connected by the flow of water.



Our freshwater system

Freshwater storage
Freshwater is stored in glaciers, snow and lakes, and rainfall and snowmelt sustain rivers and replenish groundwater.

Freshwater flows above ground in rivers, lakes and wetlands, and below ground – our hidden resource.

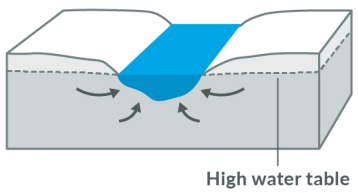
Surface water flow
Terrain, soil, vegetation and land use shape how water flows above ground. Healthy rivers, lakes and wetlands sustain biodiversity and support our economy, health and wellbeing.

Groundwater storage
Groundwater is freshwater stored underground. Water drains from the surface through the soil, filling spaces in soil and rock, and collecting in aquifers.

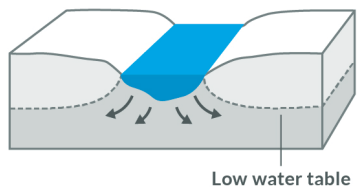
Groundwater flow
As groundwater moves slowly through underground pathways, it helps maintain river flows, but this slow pace also delays the movement of contaminants for many years.

1 Base flow maintenance

Groundwater feeds rivers, lakes and wetlands, maintaining base flow



Surface water is lost to the ground, reducing base flow



Healthy groundwater keeps river flows steady and provides reliable water for communities, especially during dry periods.

2 Our drinking water

We get our drinking water from surface water and groundwater. Because these sources constantly exchange, groundwater plays a vital but mostly hidden role in our drinking water.