



## “Groundwater, the invisible treasure”

March 22, 2022 | Simone Kral  
Topics: Drinking Water

**For World Water Day 2022, the United Nations is focusing on our groundwater – an invisible treasure that it wants to bring into the social and political spotlight. For Eawag, groundwater as a resource has long been one of its most important research priorities. An overview.**

Groundwater serves as drinking water for around half of the world’s population and provides water for over 40 percent of the world’s agriculture. So, there is no question that groundwater research plays an important role at Eawag. The aquatic research institute deals with groundwater quality, the regeneration of groundwater, geochemical processes in the subsurface and the [treatment of groundwater to produce drinking water](#), both nationally and internationally. In this way, Eawag contributes to understanding the natural and anthropogenic impacts on groundwater, which is essential for the supply of drinking water, but also for the protection of the resource and associated ecosystems such as rivers, lakes and wetlands.

### **Specialists at work – whether SDGs, machine learning or modelling**

For instance, Eawag researchers are developing and refining science-based criteria for the [assessment and modelling of water resources](#). “Our criteria are based on a detailed understanding of physical, chemical, mineralogical and biogeochemical processes, and Eawag excels in researching how they are linked,” explains Michael Berg, Head of the Water Resources and Drinking Water Department. “The studies range from molecular to macroscopic scales, from test tubes to urban water supplies and from river basins to subcontinental regions,” Berg continues.

In recent years, Berg says, Eawag has also pioneered new statistical techniques and the use of machine learning to estimate the risk of natural (geogenic) contamination using geological, topographical and other environmental data, without having to examine all groundwater wells. For this

purpose, corresponding risk maps for safe and unsafe groundwater were drawn up at the regional to global level.

**Risk maps and over 500,000 measured groundwater datasets are displayed free of charge on the [online Groundwater Assessment Platform \(GAP\)](#).**

In Switzerland and Europe, the research focus is on industrial contaminants, [plant treatment products](#) and [nitrates](#). Michael Berg adds: “In less developed regions of the world, naturally occurring [pollutants such as arsenic and fluoride play a central role](#), with approximately 400 million people (5% of the global population) still exposed to chronic poisoning. Other international issues include groundwater salination and the vulnerability of aquifers.”

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also guiding research. In connection with Goals 3, 4 and 11, Eawag researchers are investigating and developing [methods for treating groundwater](#), whose quality is not adequate for direct use as drinking water for humans.

### Challenges in groundwater research

Among the most urgent challenges in groundwater research are the predictions of climate change and the [assessment of the associated consequences](#). For example, how to improve





reactive moieties were spiked to lak

e water in the influent of a drinking water pilot plant consisting of an ozonation followed by a biological sand filtration. During ozonation, 227 transformation products (OTPs) from 39 of the spiked 51 MPs were detected after solid phase extraction by liquid chromatography high-resolution mass spectrometry (LC-HRMS/MS). Based on the MS/MS data, tentative molecular structures are proposed. Reaction mechanisms for the formation of a large number of OTPs are suggested by combination of the kinetics of formation and abatement and state-of-the-art knowledge on ozone and hydroxyl radical chemistry. OTPs forming as primary or higher generation products from the oxidation of MPs could be differentiated. However, some expected products from the reactions of ozone with activated aromatic compounds and olefins were not detected with the applied analytical procedure. 187 OTPs were present in the sand filtration in sufficiently high concentrations to elucidate their fate in this treatment step. 35 of these OTPs (19%) were abated in the sand filtration step, most likely due to biodegradation. Only 24 (13%) of the OTPs were abated more efficiently than the parent compounds, with a dependency on the functional group of the parent MPs and OTPs. Overall, this study provides evidence, that the common assumption that OTPs are easily abated in biological post-treatment is not generally valid. Nevertheless, it is unknown how the OTPs, which escaped detection, would have behaved in the biological post-treatment.' (1592 chars)

serialnumber => protected'0043-1354' (9 chars) doi =>

protected'10.1016/j.watres.2021.117812' (28 chars) uid => protected23990 (integer)

\_localizedUid => protected23990 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL

\_versionedUid => protected23990 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 1 =>

Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=18918,

pid=124) originalId => protected18918 (integer) authors => protected'Burri,&nbsp;N.&nbsp;M.;

Weatherl,&nbsp;R.; Moeck,&nbsp;C.; Schirmer,&nbsp;M.'

(76 chars) title => protected'A

review of threats to groundwater quality in the anthropocene' (62 chars) journal =>

protected'Science of the Total Environment' (32 chars) year => protected2019 (integer)

volume => protected684 (integer) issue => protected" (0 chars) startpage => protected'136' (3

chars) otherpage => protected'154' (3 chars) categories => protected'water resources;

groundwater quality; anthropogenic activity; contamination;

sustainable; transdisciplinary' (107 chars) description => protected'Awareness

concerning sustainable groundwater consumption under the context o

f land use and climate change is gaining traction, raising the bar for adequate

understanding of the complexities of natural and anthropogenic processes

and how they affect groundwater quality. The heterogeneous characteristics

of aquifers have hampered comprehensive source, transport and contaminant id

entification. As questions remain about the behavior and prediction of well-

known groundwater contaminants, new concerns around emerging contaminants ar

e on the increase. This review highlights some of the key contaminants that

originate from anthropogenic activities, organized based on land use categor

ies namely agricultural, urban and industrial. It further highlights the ext

ensive overlap, in terms of both provenance as well as contaminant type, bet

ween the different land use sectors. A selection of case studies from litera

ture that describe the continued concern of established contaminants, as wel

l as new and emerging compounds, are presented to illustrate the many qualit

ative threats to global groundwater resources. In some cases, the risk of groundwater contamination lacks adequate gravity, while in others the underlying physical and societal processes are not fully understood and activities may commence without adequately considering potential impacts. In the agricultural context, the historic and current application of fertilizers and plant protectants, use of veterinary pharmaceuticals and hormones, strives to safeguard the growing food demands. In the context of a sprawling urban environment, waste, human pharmaceuticals, and urban pesticide outputs are increasing, with adequate runoff and sanitation infrastructure often lagging. Finally, industrial activities are associated with accidental leaks and spills, while the large-scale storage of industrial byproducts has led to legacy contaminants such as those stemming from raw mineral extraction. With this review paper, we aim to unders...

(2202 chars) serialnumber => protected'0048-9697' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.05.236' (31 chars) uid => protected18918 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected18918 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected18918 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 2 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=20910, pid=124) originalId => protected20910 (integer) authors => protected'Podgorski,&nbsp;J.; Berg,&nbsp;M.' (33 chars) title => protected'Global threat of arsenic in groundwater' (39 chars) journal => protected'Science' (7 chars) year => protected2020 (integer) volume => protected368 (integer) issue => protected'6493' (4 chars) startpage => protected'845' (3 chars) otherpage => protected'850' (3 chars) categories => protected" (0 chars) description => protected'Naturally occurring arsenic in groundwater affects millions of people worldwide. We created a global prediction map of groundwater arsenic exceeding 10 micrograms per liter using a random forest machine-learning model based on 111 geospatial environmental parameters and more than 50,000 aggregated data points of measured groundwater arsenic concentration. Our global prediction map includes known arsenic-affected areas and previously undocumented areas of concern. By combining the global arsenic prediction model with household groundwater-usage statistics, we estimate that 94 million to 220 million people are potentially exposed to high arsenic concentrations in groundwater, the vast majority (94%) being in Asia. Because groundwater is increasingly used to support growing populations and buffer against water scarcity due to changing climate, this work is important to raise awareness, identify areas for safe wells, and help prioritize testing.'

(954 chars) serialnumber => protected'0036-8075' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1126/science.aba1510' (23 chars) uid => protected20910 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected20910 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected20910 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 3 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=21025, pid=124) originalId => protected21025 (integer) authors => protected'Kiefer,&nbsp;K.; Bader,&nbsp;T.; Minas,&nbsp;N.; Salhi,&nbsp;E.; Janssen,&nbsp;E.; M.&nbsp;L.; von Gunten,&nbsp;U.; Hollender,&nbsp;J.'

(139 chars) title => protected'Chlorothalonil transformation products in drinking water resources: widespread and challenging to abate' (103 chars) journal => protected'Water Research' (14 chars) year => protected2020 (integer) volume => protected183 (integer) issue => protected" (0 chars) startpage => protected'116066 (11 pp.)' (15 chars) otherpage => protected" (0 chars) categories => protected'pesticide; metabolite; water treatment; groundwater; ozonation; activated ca

rbon' (80 chars) description => protected'Chlorothalonil, a fungicide applied for decades worldwide, has recently been

banned in the European Union (EU) and Switzerland due to its carcinogenicity and the presence of potentially toxic transformation products (TPs) in groundwater. The spread and concentration range of chlorothalonil TPs in different drinking water resources was examined (73 groundwater and four surface water samples mainly from Switzerland). The chlorothalonil sulfonic acid TPs (R471811, R419492, R417888) occurred more frequently and at higher concentrations (detected in 65-100% of the samples,  $2200 \text{ ngL}^{-1}$ ) than the phenolic TPs (SYN507900, SYN548580, R611968; detected in 10-30% of the samples,  $130 \text{ ngL}^{-1}$ ). The TP R471811 was found in all samples and even in 52% of the samples above  $100 \text{ ngL}^{-1}$ , the drinking water standard in Switzerland and other European countries. Therefore, the abatement of chlorothalonil TPs was investigated in laboratory and pilot-scale experiments and along the treatment train of various water works, comprising aquifer recharge, UV disinfection, ozonation, advanced oxidation processes (AOPs), activated carbon treatment, and reverse osmosis. The phenolic TPs can be abated during ozonation (second order rate constant  $k_{\text{O}_3} > 10^4 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and by reaction with hydroxyl radicals (OH) in AOPs ( $k_{\text{OH}} > 10^9 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ). In contrast, the sulfonic acid TPs, which occurred in higher concentrations in drinking water resources, react only very slowly with ozone ( $k_{\text{O}_3} < 0.04 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and OH ( $k_{\text{OH}} < 5.0 \times 10^7 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and therefore persist in ozonation and OH-based AOPs. Activated carbon retained the very polar TP R471811 only up to a specific throughput of  $25 \text{ m}^3 \text{ kg}^{-1}$  (20% breakthrough), similarly to the X-ray contrast agent diatrizoic acid.

Reverse osmosis was capa...' (2050 chars) serialnumber => protected'0043-1354' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1016/j.watres.2020.116066' (28 chars) uid => protected21025 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected21025 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected21025 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 4 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=19902, pid=124) originalId => protected19902 (integer) authors => protected'Popp,&nbsp;A.&nbsp;L.; Manning,&nbsp;C.&nbsp;C.; Brennwald,&nbsp;M.&nbsp;S.;

Kipfer,&nbsp;R.' (92 chars) title => protected'A new in situ method for tracing denitrification in riparian groundwater' (72 chars) journal => protected'Environmental Science and Technology' (36 chars) year => protected2020 (integer) volume => protected554 (integer) issue => protected" (0 chars) startpage => protected'1562' (4 chars) otherpage => protected'1572' (4 chars) categories => protected" (0 chars) description => protected'The spatio-temporal dynamics of denitrification in groundwater are still not

well understood due to a lack of efficient methods to quantify this biogeochemical reaction pathway. Previous research used the ratio of  $\text{N}_2$  to argon (Ar) to quantify net production of  $\text{N}_2$  via denitrification by separating the biologically-generated  $\text{N}_2$  component from the atmospheric-generated components. However, this method does not allow to quantify the atmospheric components accurately since the differences in gas partitioning between  $\text{N}_2$  and Ar are being neglected. Moreover, conventional (noble) gas analysis in water is both expensive and labor-intensive.

We overcome these limitations by using a portable mass spectrometer system, which enables a fast and efficient in situ analysis of dissolved (noble) gases in groundwater. By analyzing a larger set of (noble) gases ( $N_2$ , He, Ar and Kr) combined with a physically meaningful excess air model, we quantified  $N_2$  originating from denitrification. Consequently, we were able to study the spatio-temporal dynamics of  $N_2$  production due to denitrification in riparian groundwater over a six-month period. Our results show that denitrification is highly variable in space and time, emphasizing the need for spatially and temporally resolved data to accurately account for denitrification dynamics in groundwater.' (1418 chars) serialnumber => protected'0013-936X' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1021/acs.est.9b05393' (23 chars) uid => protected19902 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected19902 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected19902 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 5 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=20372, pid=124) originalId => protected20372 (integer) authors => protected'Moeck,&nbsp;C.; Grech-Cumbo,&nbsp;N.; Podgorski,&nbsp;J.; Bretzler,&nbsp;A.; Gurdak,&nbsp;J.&nbsp;J.; Berg,&nbsp;M.; Schirmer,&nbsp;M.' (134 chars) title => protected'A global-scale dataset of direct natural groundwater recharge rates: a review of variables, processes and relationships' (119 chars) journal => protected'Science of the Total Environment' (32 chars) year => protected2020 (integer) volume => protected717 (integer) issue => protected" (0 chars) startpage => protected'137042 (19 pp.)' (15 chars) otherpage => protected" (0 chars) categories => protected'groundwater recharge; groundwater quantity; global-scale dataset; arid regions; model validation' (96 chars) description => protected'Groundwater recharge indicates the existence of renewable groundwater resources and is therefore an important component in sustainability studies. However, recharge is also one of the least understood, largely because it varies in space and time and is difficult to measure directly. For most studies, only a relatively small number of measurements is available, which hampers a comprehensive understanding of processes driving recharge and the validation of hydrogeological model formulations for small- and large-scale applications.  
We present a new global recharge dataset encompassing >5000 locations. In order to gain insights into recharge processes, we provide a systematic analysis between the dataset and other global-scale datasets, such as climatic or soil-related parameters. Precipitation rates and seasonality in temperature and precipitation were identified as the most important variables in predicting recharge. The high dependency of recharge on climate indicates its sensitivity to climate change. We also show that vegetation and soil structure have an explanatory power for recharge. Since these conditions can be highly variable, recharge estimates based only on climatic parameters may be misleading.  
The freely available dataset offers diverse possibilities to study recharge processes from a variety of perspectives. By noting the existing gaps in understanding, we hope to encourage the community to initiate new research into recharge processes and subsequently make recharge data available to improve recharge predictions.' (1565 chars) serialnumber => protected'0048-9697' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.137042' (31 chars) uid => protected20372 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected20372 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected20372 (integer)modified pid =>

protected124 (integer) 6 =>

Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=18761, pid=124) originalId => protected18761 (integer) authors => protected'Podgorski,&nbsp;J.; Berg,&nbsp;M.; Kipfer,&nbsp;R.' (50 chars) title => protected'Isotope mapping of groundwater pollution and renewal' (52 chars) journal => protected'IAEA Bulletin' (13 chars) year => protected2019 (integer) volume => protected60 (integer) issue => protected'1' (1 chars) startpage => protected'31' (2 chars) otherpage => protected'32' (2 chars) categories => protected'' (0 chars) description => protected'An index aquifer vulnerability study from western Canada (left) compared wit

h a new logistic regression map of these vulnerability index values on the online GAP platform (right). The red colour shows areas with the highest vulnerability. The green areas are less vulnerable or adequately protected from surface contamination.' (326 chars) serialnumber => protected'' (0 chars) doi => protected'' (0 chars) uid => protected18761 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected18761 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected18761 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 7 =>

Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=14228, pid=124) originalId => protected14228 (integer) authors => protected'Hering,&nbsp;J.&nbsp;G.; Katsoyiannis,&nbsp;I.&nbsp;A.; Ahumada Theoduloz,&nbsp;G.; Berg,&nbsp;M.; Hug,&nbsp;S.&nbsp;J.' (119 chars) title => protected'Arsenic removal from drinking water: experiences with technologies and const

rains in practice' (94 chars) journal => protected'Journal of Environmental Engineering' (36 chars) year => protected2017 (integer) volume => protected143 (integer) issue => protected'5' (1 chars) startpage => protected'03117002 (9 pp.)' (16 chars) otherpage => protected'' (0 chars) categories => protected'' (0 chars) description => protected'Treatment of drinking water for arsenic (As) removal has been implemented in

centralized facilities worldwide, reflecting the increasingly stringent national and international drinking water standards for As, for which a standard of 10  $\mu\text{g/L}$  has been widely adopted. It might therefore be expected that information on the performance of installed treatment processes could serve as basis for process optimization and more-informed decisions on process selection. A review of available information on installed treatment does provide some insight into the scale of implementation, factors driving process selection and difficulties that have arisen in practice (as a complement to more accessible information on bench-scale and pilot-scale studies). The availability of information on treatment performance at full-scale treatment is, however, severely limited. The rapid advances in information technology and consequent elimination of technical barriers to sharing information and knowledge should allow the development of an international, accessible database or even a metadata portal for installed technologies for As removal that would offer the potential to benefit from past and ongoing experience in practice.' (1226 chars) serialnumber => protected'0733-9372' (9 chars) doi =>

protected'10.1061/(ASCE)EE.1943-7870.0001225' (34 chars) uid => protected14228 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected14228 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected14228 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 8 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=21198, pid=124) originalId => protected21198 (integer) authors => protected'Hug,&nbsp;S.&nbsp;J.; Winkel,&nbsp;L.&nbsp;H.&nbsp;E.; Voegelin,&nbsp;A.; Be

rg,&nbsp;M.; Johnson,&nbsp;C.&nbsp;A.' (113 chars) title => protected'Arsenic and other geogenic contaminants in groundwater - a global challenge' (75 chars) journal => protected'Chimia' (6 chars) year => protected2020 (integer) volume => protected74 (integer) issue => protected'7/8' (3 chars) startpage => protected'524' (3 chars) otherpage => protected'537' (3 chars) categories => protected'arsenic; fluoride; geogenic contamination; groundwater' (54 chars) description => protected'Groundwater is a much safer and more dependable source of drinking water tha

n surface water. However, natural (geogenic) hazardous elements can contaminate groundwater and lead to severe health problems in consumers. Arsenic concentrations exceeding the WHO drinking water guideline of 10 µg/L globally affect over 220 million people and can cause arsenicosis (skin lesions and cancers). Fluoride, while preventing caries at low concentrations, has detrimental effects when above the WHO drinking water guideline of 1.5 mg/L and puts several hundred million people at risk of dental and skeletal fluorosis.

In this article, we report on the geochemistry and occurrence of arsenic and fluoride in groundwater and on the development of global and regional risk maps that help alert governments and water providers to take appropriate mitigation measures for the provision of safe drinking water. We then summarize research on the removal of arsenic and fluoride from drinking water, focusing on adapted technologies for water treatment. Finally, we discuss the applicability of various measures in a larger context and future challenges in r

eaching the goal of access to safe drinking water for all.' (1198 chars) serialnumber => protected'0009-4293' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.2533/chimia.2020.524' (23 chars) uid => protected21198 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected21198 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected21198 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 9 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=22645, pid=124) originalId => protected22645 (integer) authors => protected'Seltzer,&nbsp;A.&nbsp;M.; Ng,&nbsp;J.; Aeschbach,&nbsp;W.; Kipfer,&nbsp;R.;

Kulongoski,&nbsp;J.&nbsp;T.; Severinghaus,&nbsp;J.&nbsp;P.; Stute,&nbsp;M.' (150 chars) title => protected'Widespread six degrees Celsius cooling on land during the Last Glacial Maxim

um' (78 chars) journal => protected'Nature' (6 chars) year => protected2021 (integer) volume => protected593 (integer) issue => protected'7858' (4 chars) startpage => protected'228' (3 chars) otherpage => protected'232' (3 chars) categories => protected'' (0 chars) description => protected'The magnitude of global cooling during the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM, the co

ldest multimillennial interval of the last glacial period) is an important constraint for evaluating estimates of Earth's climate sensitivity<sup>1,2</sup>. Reliable LGM temperatures come from high-latitude ice cores<sup>3,4</sup>, but substantial disagreement exists between proxy records in the low latitudes<sup>1,5–8</sup>, where quantitative low-elevation records on land are scarce. Filling this data gap, noble gases in ancient groundwater record past land surface temperatures through a direct physical relationship that is rooted in their temperature-dependent solubility in water<sup>9,10</sup>. Dissolved noble gases are suitable tracers of LGM temperature because of their complete insensitivity to biological and chemical processes and the ubiquity of LGM-aged groundwater around the globe<sup>11,12</sup>. However, although several individual noble gas studies have found substantial tropical L

GM cooling<sup>13–16</sup>, they have used different methodologies and provide limited spatial coverage. Here we use noble gases in groundwater to show that the low-altitude, low-to-mid-latitude land surface (45 degrees south to 35 degrees north) cooled by  $5.8 \pm 0.6$  degrees Celsius (mean  $\pm$  95 % confidence interval) during the LGM. Our analysis includes four decades of groundwater noble gas data from six continents, along with new records from the tropics, all of which were interpreted using the same physical framework. Our land-based result broadly supports a recent reconstruction based on marine proxy data assimilation<sup>1</sup> that suggested greater climate sensitivity than previous estimates<sup>5–7</sup>. (1721 chars) serialnumber => protected'0028-0836' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1038/s41586-021-03467-6' (26 chars) uid => protected22645 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected22645 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected22645 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 10 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=24474, pid=124) originalId => protected24474 (integer) authors => protected'Pool,&nbsp;S.; Francés,&nbsp;F.; Garcia-Prats,&nbsp;A.; Puertes,&nbsp;C.; Pulido-Velazquez,&nbsp;M.; Sanchis-Ibor,&nbsp;C.; Schirmer,&nbsp;M.; Yang,&nbsp;H.; Jiménez-Martínez,&nbsp;J.' (186 chars) title => protected'Impact of a transformation from flood to drip irrigation on groundwater recharge and nitrogen leaching under variable climatic conditions' (137 chars) journal => protected'Science of the Total Environment' (32 chars) year => protected2022 (integer) volume => protected825 (integer) issue => protected" (0 chars) startpage => protected'153805 (11 pp.)' (15 chars) otherpage => protected" (0 chars) categories => protected'agriculture; irrigation and nitrogen management practices; climate sensitivity; precipitation variability; fertigation; Mediterranean climate' (141 chars) description => protected'The sustainability of agriculture in the Mediterranean climate is challenged by high irrigation water demands and nitrogen fertilizer losses to the environment, causing significant pressure on groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent ecosystems. Advanced irrigation technologies and improved fertilizer management have been promoted as key solutions to reduce the agricultural impact on aquatic systems. However, it remains unclear how different irrigation-fertilizer practices perform on the long-term under a highly variable climate, such as the Mediterranean one. Here, we conduct hydrological simulations over a fifty-year period to quantify the magnitude and dynamics of groundwater recharge and nitrogen leaching under five real-case irrigation-fertilizer practices observed in Valencia (eastern Spain). The Valencian Region is the largest citrus-producing region of Europe and current irrigation-fertilizer practices reflect the ongoing transformation of irrigation systems from flood to drip irrigation. Our simulations highlight three major implications of the irrigation transformation for groundwater resources. First, the transformation from flood to drip irrigation reduces the recharge fraction (19% vs. 16%) and especially the nitrogen leaching fraction (33% vs. 18%) on the long term. Second, the long-term performance of the two irrigation practices is subject to substantial inter-annual differences controlled by precipitation variability. The sensitivity of recharge and nitrogen leaching to annual meteorological conditions is stronger in drip irrigation, which eventually leads to a similar performance of flood and drip irrigation in wet years if fertilizer inputs are similar. Third, we identify a pronounced year-to-

year nitrogen memory in the soil, whereby an enhanced (decreased) nitrogen leaching is observed after anomalously dry (wet) years, affecting the performance of irrigation-fertilizer practices. Overall, the study demonstrates the highly variable nature ...' (2208 chars) serialnumber => protected'0048-9697' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.153805' (31 chars) uid => protected24474 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected24474 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected24474 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) 11 => Snowflake\Publications\Domain\Model\Publicationprototypepersistent entity (uid=17664, pid=124) originalId => protected17664 (integer) authors => protected'Moeck,&nbsp;C.; Radny,&nbsp;D.; Huggenberger,&nbsp;P.; Affolter,&nbsp;A.; Auckenthaler,&nbsp;A.; Hollender,&nbsp;J.; Berg,&nbsp;M.; Schirmer,&nbsp;M.' (149 chars) title => protected'Verteilung anthropogen eingetragener Stoffe im Grundwasser: ein Fallbeispiel aus der Nordschweiz' (96 chars) journal => protected'Grundwasser' (11 chars) year => protected2018 (integer) volume => protected23 (integer) issue => protected'4' (1 chars) startpage => protected'297' (3 chars) otherpage => protected'309' (3 chars) categories => protected'stable water isotopes; organic micropollutants; chlorinated solvents; artificial groundwater recharge; urban hydrogeology; Switzerland' (134 chars) description => protected'Im Wassergewinnungsgebiet Hardwald werden rund 15 Mio. m<sup>3</sup>/a Trinkwasser produziert. Es finden sich jedoch Spuren von chlorierten organischen Verbindungen im Grundwasser. Als Fallstudie werden hier die Ergebnisse von Feld- und Laborarbeiten zur Bestimmung der räumlichen Verteilung der chlorierten organischen Verbindungen, der stabilen Wasserisotope (<sup>18</sup>O und <sup>2</sup>D), der Hauptkationen- und -anionen und ausgewählter Spurenstoffe, welche über ein Rheinfiltrat eingetragen werden, vorgestellt. Als Ergebnis der Untersuchung zeigte sich, dass die künstliche Rheinwasserinfiltration ganz entscheidend zur Trinkwassersicherheit beiträgt und das entnommene Grundwasser vorwiegend der chemischen Signatur des infiltrierten Rheinwassers entspricht. Jedoch zeigt sich auch, dass durch die über die Fläche ungleichmäßig verteilte Infiltration vor allem eine Beimischung von Muschelkalkwasser in süd-westlichen Bereichen des Untersuchungsgebiets wahrscheinlich ist. Diese Interpretation wird durch die Verteilung der chlorierten organischen Verbindungen, Hauptkationen- und -anionen, stabilen Wasserisotopen und Spurenstoffen gestützt. Trotz der hier vorhandenen komplexen Randbedingungen wird durch das Zusammenspiel von künstlicher Infiltration und Entnahme eine sichere Trinkwasserversorgung ermöglicht.<br/><br/> At the Hardwald study site, Switzerland, 15 million cubic metres per year of drinking water is being pumped. Chlorinated compounds, however, have been detected in the groundwater. We present results from field sampling and lab analyses to determine the spatial distribution of chlorinated organic compounds, stable water isotopes (<sup>18</sup>O und <sup>2</sup>D), major ions as well as selected micropollutants, which enter the groundwater by artificial recharge. We demonstrate that artificial groundwater recharge is essential for water security and that t...' (2549 chars) serialnumber => protected'1430-483X' (9 chars) doi => protected'10.1007/s00767-018-0403-6' (25 chars) uid => protected17664 (integer) \_localizedUid => protected17664 (integer)modified \_languageUid => protectedNULL \_versionedUid => protected17664 (integer)modified pid => protected124 (integer) Gulde, R.;

- Clerc, B.; Rutsch, M.; Helbing, J.; Salhi, E.; McArdell, C. S.; von Gunten, U. (2021) Oxidation of 51 micropollutants during drinking water ozonation: formation of transformation products and their fate during biological post-filtration, *Water Research*, 207, 117812 (20 pp.), doi:[10.1016/j.watres.2021.117812](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2021.117812), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Burri, N. M.; Weatherl, R.; Moeck, C.; Schirmer, M. (2019) A review of threats to groundwater quality in the anthropocene, *Science of the Total Environment*, 684, 136-154, doi:[10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.05.236](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.05.236), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Podgorski, J.; Berg, M. (2020) Global threat of arsenic in groundwater, *Science*, 368(6493), 845-850, doi:[10.1126/science.aba1510](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aba1510), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Kiefer, K.; Bader, T.; Minas, N.; Salhi, E.; Janssen, E. M. -L.; von Gunten, U.; Hollender, J. (2020) Chlorothalonil transformation products in drinking water resources: widespread and challenging to abate, *Water Research*, 183, 116066 (11 pp.), doi:[10.1016/j.watres.2020.116066](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2020.116066), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Popp, A. L.; Manning, C. C.; Brennwald, M. S.; Kipfer, R. (2020) A new in situ method for tracing denitrification in riparian groundwater, *Environmental Science and Technology*, 554, 1562-1572, doi:[10.1021/acs.est.9b05393](https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.9b05393), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Moeck, C.; Grech-Cumbo, N.; Podgorski, J.; Bretzler, A.; Gurdak, J. J.; Berg, M.; Schirmer, M. (2020) A global-scale dataset of direct natural groundwater recharge rates: a review of variables, processes and relationships, *Science of the Total Environment*, 717, 137042 (19 pp.), doi:[10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.137042](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.137042), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Podgorski, J.; Berg, M.; Kipfer, R. (2019) Isotope mapping of groundwater pollution and renewal, *IAEA Bulletin*, 60(1), 31-32, [Institutional Repository](#)
- Hering, J. G.; Katsoyiannis, I. A.; Ahumada Theoduloz, G.; Berg, M.; Hug, S. J. (2017) Arsenic removal from drinking water: experiences with technologies and constraints in practice, *Journal of Environmental Engineering*, 143(5), 03117002 (9 pp.), doi:[10.1061/\(ASCE\)EE.1943-7870.0001225](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)EE.1943-7870.0001225), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Hug, S. J.; Winkel, L. H. E.; Voegelin, A.; Berg, M.; Johnson, C. A. (2020) Arsenic and other geogenic contaminants in groundwater - a global challenge, *Chimia*, 74(7/8), 524-537, doi:[10.2533/chimia.2020.524](https://doi.org/10.2533/chimia.2020.524), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Seltzer, A. M.; Ng, J.; Aeschbach, W.; Kipfer, R.; Kulongoski, J. T.; Severinghaus, J. P.; Stute, M. (2021) Widespread six degrees Celsius cooling on land during the Last Glacial Maximum, *Nature*, 593(7858), 228-232, doi:[10.1038/s41586-021-03467-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03467-6), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Pool, S.; Francés, F.; Garcia-Prats, A.; Puertes, C.; Pulido-Velazquez, M.; Sanchis-Ibor, C.; Schirmer, M.; Yang, H.; Jiménez-Martínez, J. (2022) Impact of a transformation from flood to drip irrigation on groundwater recharge and nitrogen leaching under variable climatic conditions, *Science of the Total Environment*, 825, 153805 (11 pp.), doi:[10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.153805](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.153805), [Institutional Repository](#)
- Moeck, C.; Radny, D.; Huggenberger, P.; Affolter, A.; Auckenthaler, A.; Hollender, J.; Berg, M.; Schirmer, M. (2018) Verteilung anthropogen eingetragener Stoffe im Grundwasser: ein Fallbeispiel aus der Nordschweiz, *Grundwasser*, 23(4), 297-309, doi:[10.1007/s00767-018-0403-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00767-018-0403-6), [Institutional Repository](#)

## Related Links

Interactive Groundwater Assessment Platform GAP

GAP Maps

Interview with Christian Moeck on World Water Day:

## Contact



**Michael Berg**

Deputy Head of Department

Tel. +41 58 765 5078

[michael.berg@eawag.ch](mailto:michael.berg@eawag.ch)



**Simone Kral**

Responsable de la communication

Tel. +41 58 765 6882

[simone.kral@eawag.ch](mailto:simone.kral@eawag.ch)

<https://www.eawag.ch/en/info/portal/news/news-archive/archive-detail/groundwater-the-invisible-treasure>