



## How does a Weta hear?

### Fact

- Weta have ears, they're just not on the sides of a weta's head like ours are.
- A Weta's ears are on its front legs near its knee joints. They don't look like our ears though; they're more like little holes that are quite hard to see.
- Weta also have very simple feelers on their bottoms called cerci (sir-key) which they use to detect vibrations – including vibrations caused by sound so the cerci work a bit like ears too.
- They use their ears to listen out for predators – other creatures that might like to eat them or hurt them.

### Do you know

- Cave Weta, like the one in the photos here, are called Cave Weta because they like to live in dark places like... caves.
- Cave Weta are different to other Weta because they have very strong legs that are good at jumping. Most other Weta can't jump or if they can, don't do it very well.
- Weta are related to grasshoppers, locusts and crickets.
- People who study Weta are called Entomologists
- There are Weta all over the world (they just get called different names like "cave crickets" etc) but New Zealand has the greatest number of different kinds of Weta. We have over fifty different kinds of cave Weta and over 40 different normal Weta.

### Experiments you can do

A Weta has its ears near its knee joints on its front legs because it is the highest point on the Weta's body and because the knees face out in different directions the Weta can listen for sounds in almost all directions.

Use your ears to work out which direction a sound is coming from and how close it is to you. Cover your eyes with a blind fold and have someone rattle some keys or something else noisy near you. See if you can point in the direction the sound is coming from without peeping.

### Other Investigations

Cave Weta are not just found in dark places like caves but in lots of other dark places too, like under stones and loose bark or under fallen trees in the forest.

Have a look around your garden and see if you can see a Cave Weta hiding in a dark spot.

### Jokes

Did you hear about the Italian bug that went out in the rain? He gotta weta (got wet)