

Part 1: Assess wetland status under the RMA

Start here if there is uncertainty or doubt about:
 a. whether a wetland meets the RMA definition of a wetland and/or
 b. the extent of the wetland area

1. Assess using the wetland delineation protocols (WDPs)¹
 (these are steps 2-5 below)

2. Vegetation tool: Rapid test

Pass

Fail

3. Vegetation tool:
 Dominance test and
 prevalence index

Passes both

Fails both

Uncertain, or passes one but not the other

4. Hydric soils tool
 and
 5. Wetland hydrology tool

Passes both, or fails hydric soils, passes hydrology²

Fails both

Pass hydric soil test, fail hydrology test

Drained wetland or atypical environmental conditions. Site assessment needed to determine status³

Non-wetland

Go to part 2

Part 2: Assess whether a wetland is a 'natural wetland' or 'natural inland wetland' under the NPS-FM

Start here if an area meets the RMA definition of a wetland, but it is unclear whether or not it is captured by 'natural wetland' or 'natural inland wetland'

6. Assess whether the area has 'natural wetland' status

7. Is it an induced wetland?

No

8. Is it a wetland constructed by artificial means?

Yes

No

9. Was the wetland constructed to offset or restore a former natural inland wetland?

Yes

10. Is it a geothermal wetland?

No, or only partially (at discretion of regional council)

11. Is it in an area of improved pasture?

No

Yes

12. Is it dominated by (>50%) exotic pasture species? (species should be identified by the regional council in the absence of a national list)

No

Yes

13. Does the site pass the wetland hydrology test?

No

Yes

15. Is the site in the CMA?

No

Yes

'Natural inland wetland'

Wetland not subject to NES-F⁴ or NPS-FM (but councils still have obligations under the RMA)

'Natural wetland'

Wetland excluded from 'natural wetland' definition (but may still be protected under the RMA)

Temporary rain-derived pooling can be inferred from absence of permanent wetland hydrology

Footnotes

¹ WDPs are not the only method that may be used to determine wetland status under the RMA. However, use is recommended for consistency. WDPs mostly do not account for wetland fauna. See section 4 of guidance.

² For example, recent wetland.

³ The US procedures for atypical or problematic situations are recommended. See wetland delineation protocols (Aug 2020) for detail (page 5).

⁴ Pending Environment Court appeal on NES-F jurisdiction. See section 11 of guide.