

Part 1: Assess wetland status under the RMA

Start here if it 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

Uncertain, or passes one but not the other

4. Hydric
soils tool

5. Wetland
and hydrology
tool

Passes both,
or fails hydric
soils, passes
hydrology²

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

Wetland
under the
RMA

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?

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'

Go to

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.