



# Do you have a wetland on your property?

## You have an important role to play

### What is a wetland?

Wetland (wetland) is an area of land that – as the name suggests – is covered or influenced by water. Wetlands are the natural boundary between land and open water, and occur in areas where surface water collects or where underground water seeps through to the surface. Some wetlands are still full of native flora and fauna; while others may be dominated by exotic or pasture species.

If you discover a wet, soggy or spongy patch on your land, it could be a wetland and we want to work with you to protect this valuable ecosystem.

### Why are they important?

Wetlands are important ecosystems because they:

- Help to maintain water quality.
- Support biodiversity, including many threatened species of plants and animals.
- Can store carbon.
- Reduce the impacts of flooding and droughts by absorbing heavy rain and gradually releasing water once the soil has dried out. They also stabilise shorelines and riverbanks.
- Are taonga (sacred) and are of great cultural value to Māori.

### Wetlands in the Bay of Plenty

Historically, large areas of New Zealand were wetlands. They were used by Māori as a transport pathway, and a food, storage and fibre resource. However, these were drained to be more 'productive', so the land could be used for industry, housing, horticulture or farming.

In the Bay of Plenty alone, less than 10% of our original wetlands remain, and those remaining wetlands continue to be under pressure from the impacts of land use, and plant and animal pests. Many wetland plants and animals are now threatened with extinction.



Having a wetland can affect what you can do on your property, and we are here to help you understand what this means, as well as support you with identification and restoration.

## How we can help

### Wetland identification:

Identification of wetlands can be tricky, as all wetlands are different – and some are not always wet! If you require help determining the presence and extent of a natural wetland, please get in touch with your local Land Management Officer for specialist advice.

#### Types of wetlands include:

- **Swamps:** Formed by groundwater seepage or surface run-off (e.g. from streams), and are usually permanently wet.
- **Seepage:** A sloping area with a steady flow of groundwater and/or surface water, but with less volume than a stream or spring. Low plants, such as mosses, cushion plants or sedges are typical.
- **Estuarine habitats:** In tidal zones, such as salt marshes and mudflats, with herbfields, rushlands, scrublands and mangroves.
- Other types include **marshes, ephemeral wetlands, fens, mires** and **bogs**.

## Wetland restoration:

Many landowners are working to restore and protect the wetlands on their land, as they can offer a range of environmental and economic benefits.

#### Why restoration?

- Helps mitigate the impacts of flooding.
- Reduces the effects of heavy rainfall, i.e. provides a buffer during heavy rain and helps reduce erosion.
- Better utilise land that is not suitable for farming.
- Stop grazing animals from getting stuck in wet areas (by fencing off wetlands).
- Environmental benefits (such as slowing run-off, trapping sediment, assisting with fish passage and providing habitat).

Our Land Management Officers can provide expert advice on how to protect and restore wetlands, and may be able to offer financial assistance with fencing, animal pest control and weed control.

## Wetland rules and regulations:

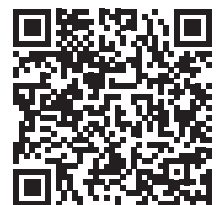
There are a number of national, regional and local regulatory documents that govern the activities that can and can't be done in and around a wetland in the Bay of Plenty (for example building structures, such as a maimai, earthworks, damming and vegetation removal).

Some activities within and around wetlands may require a resource consent, or are prohibited altogether. The rules and regulations can be complicated and how they affect you depends on a range of factors. We are here to help if you have questions about your individual situation.

If your property borders a wetland (coastal or land-based), you have an important role to play to ensure its survival. Before starting works or removing plants and trees near wetlands, chat to your local Land Management Officer, who can provide advice and support.

### Want to know more about wetlands?

Visit our website by scanning the QR code or go to:  
[boprc.govt.nz/wetlands](https://boprc.govt.nz/wetlands)



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Email: [info@boprc.govt.nz](mailto:info@boprc.govt.nz)

Visit: [boprc.govt.nz/land-management-officers](https://boprc.govt.nz/land-management-officers)

