

Wetlands

Wetlands, riparian margins and other areas of indigenous vegetation create habitats for indigenous fauna and have important natural character values. In Canterbury, less than 10 percent of the region’s previously-extensive freshwater natural wetlands remain. Drivers of change, particularly wetland loss since European settlement, include drainage, diversion of water, infilling, reclamation, urban development, flooding, fire, vegetation clearance, cultivation, grazing and spread of introduced species. The mapping of the wetlands, and wetland projects helps us paint a picture of where remaining wetlands are, whether they are protected and identification of gaps to be filled. Planning provisions that protect the biodiversity values of natural wetlands are critical and are included in Canterbury’s regional policy statement and plans. The Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) requires the protection and maintenance of wetlands that contribute to cultural and community values, biodiversity, water quality, mahinga kai, water cleansing and flood mitigation.

Targets

From 2010:

Prevent further loss of area of naturally occurring wetlands.

By 2015:

Protected all and restored at least two significant wetlands in each zone.

By 2020/2040:

Protected all wetlands.

Progress to 2020

Not started

Started

Progress

Good progress

Achieving

- Through the Immediate Steps Biodiversity programme, wetland protection and restoration projects continue to be implemented for two or more naturally occurring wetlands, every year, in each CWMS zone.
- Funding is available annually for protection and restoration of biodiversity on private and public land, including for naturally occurring wetlands.
- Approximately \$1.7m of Immediate Steps Biodiversity funding has been invested in 132 wetland projects across the region. Of these wetland project sites, 46 have legal protection.
- Threatened wetland areas have been identified and Immediate Steps projects prioritised according to ecological and cultural rankings.
- The Regional Wetlands map has been compiled from the Freshwater Ecosystems of New Zealand (FENZ) wetland spatial layer for Canterbury. The map also includes results of field surveys, mapping and descriptions of the region’s coastal wetland habitats. The wetlands of Canterbury have also been mapped and described using the systems, techniques and classifications of Johnson & Gerbeaux (2004), Clackson et al. (2003) and Atkinson (1985). Primary classification was based on vegetation structure (e.g shrubland, reedland, herbfield).
- Wetlands remain subject to the core provisions of the RMA that apply to freshwater bodies and the Coastal Marine Area. Planning provisions that offer additional protections are in place through the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) including policies where intensively farmed stock must be excluded from lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- Potential ecological impacts on wetlands are assessed during consents processes and development.
- Over 3,000 Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) have been completed across the region. FEPs are developed by farmers to identify at risk areas on farms. FEPs also outline actions needed to improve management of nutrient, soils and water bodies including wetlands. The goal is to have all farms at Good Management Practice (GMP).