



How do we identify and map wetlands?

The wetlands layer on Canterbury Maps contains information from a variety of sources and distinguishes between ‘ground survey’ and ‘aerial survey’ wetlands. Most of the mapped wetlands are in the ‘aerial survey’ category.



Aerial survey – Using high resolution aerial photographs, our ecologists look for characteristic vegetation types, colours, patterns and the presence of visible water, as well as hydrological information, to identify possible/indicative wetland habitats.



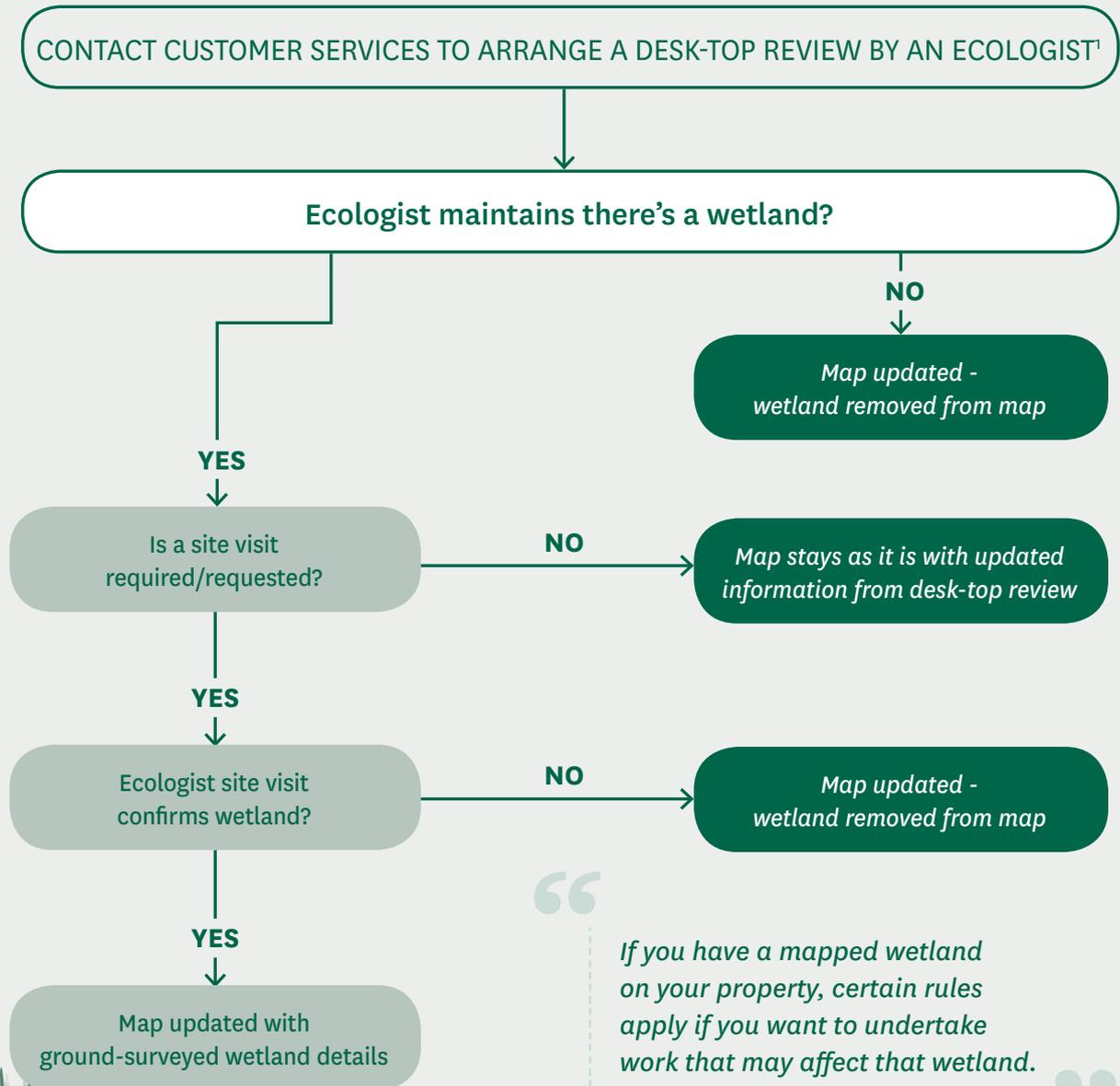
Ground survey – These wetlands have been field inspected, described and mapped by Environment Canterbury staff and/or other agencies (eg, Department of Conservation or New Zealand Defence Force). Details specific to the wetland are recorded, including type, vegetation and an assessment of its ecological significance.

Our ongoing work programme is designed to continually add to and further delineate the coverage of existing information to ensure precision of the mapping, using both aerial survey and ground surveys.

Wetlands

1. FACTS AND MAPPING

Wetland mapping review process



1. Email customer services on ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz with details of your request, including your property (address, legal description if available) and the wetland ID number (this is on the map when you click on the wetland).

Canterbury's wetlands are rich in biodiversity values and provide habitats for many species of plants and animals. They also play an important role in nutrient and sediment filtering, water quality, and flood control, so it is essential that we protect them.

Since European settlement in Canterbury, we have lost over 90% of the region's previously extensive freshwater natural wetlands and about half of our coastal wetlands. Reasons for this loss are a combination of physical and ecological modifications that have been made to meet human needs for urban and rural land use and recreation.

Mapping these wetlands helps us to paint a picture of where our remaining wetlands are so that we can all work towards protecting them.

Wetlands are vital in maintaining healthy ecosystems. They:

- > work like sponges to store water and maintain water flow during dry periods;
- > work like kidneys by filtering out sediment and nutrients, improving water quality;
- > can help to mitigate floods;
- > support many species of plants and animals that are found nowhere else;
- > can provide or improve amenity values, such as game bird hunting opportunities or landscape value;
- > can add value to properties, and are assets to landowners; and
- > are of great cultural and spiritual significance to Maori, providing food (eg, wildfowl, tuna (eels) and other freshwater fish) and offering places to grow taro and harvest harakeke (flax) and other materials for medicine, food, building and crafts.

KEY FACTS about the updated wetlands layer:



- > We use a combination of aerial imagery and on-the-ground observations to identify where wetlands may exist, so this is the best information we have in relation to actual and potential wetlands.
- > Where a wetland has been identified on your property, and you want it ground-surveyed, we will come to you for a site visit, free of charge.
- > If you have a mapped wetland on your property, certain rules apply if you want to undertake work that may affect that wetland. But this is not an immediate 'stop signal' – it's the gateway to a planning process that we will work through with you.
- > Contact us to discuss the details of the work you want to do, and whether you might need a consent to get started, or refer to our fact sheet **Wetlands 2: Consenting process**

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Who do I contact for more information?

Environment Canterbury's customer services team
– 0800 324 636, ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz or
<https://www.ecan.govt.nz/info/contact/>