

Stock Exclusion Regulations

Protecting Our Region's Waterways



In September 2020, the Ministry for the Environment issued a package of freshwater regulations designed to protect and restore the health of New Zealand's waterways.

The new national requirements work together with our own regional rules, outlined in our Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP).

We encourage landowners and people who own or manage livestock to familiarise themselves with the regulations that apply in the Wellington Region, and what they mean for them and their farm.

The purpose of Stock exclusion

Allowing livestock to enter water bodies can cause significant damage, pollution, and habitat loss for freshwater species.

Heavy livestock such as cattle, deer and pigs have the greatest impact on the health of waterways. When stock trample banks and beds of water bodies, they increase streambank erosion and sediment runoff. They may also cause contamination through discharge of dung and urine.

Livestock dung can carry disease-causing organisms like campylobacter, which can make people sick when they come into contact with affected water. This compromises New

Zealanders' ability to use waterbodies for recreation and mahinga kai (food gathering).

Dung and urine also contain nutrients which promote weed growth, which can decrease the water's ability to support a healthy ecosystem.

By excluding stock from wetlands, rivers, and other water bodies, we are taking important steps to reduce freshwater contamination, prevent damage to banks and vegetation and protect freshwater ecosystems.

Get advice

If you are unsure about how the rules apply to your situation, please get in touch with us via your usual Land Management Advisor or info@gw.govt.nz

Who does this apply to?

The stock exclusion regulations apply to any person who owns or manages livestock. If you own land in the Wellington Region that has a waterway or wetland identified in our PNRP, you also need to be aware of these rules.

Stock will need to be excluded from waterbodies by the dates indicated in the timeline below.

Types of waterways

The national regulations outline stock exclusion from lakes, wide rivers, and wetlands more than 1 metre wide. This means that if the riverbed measures more than 1 metre bank-to-bank anywhere in the land parcel, the rules will apply to the whole river. The bed is measured at the point which the water reaches at its fullest, rather than during dry periods.

There are also specifically identified waterways and wetlands identified in our PNRP, which are known as **Category 1 and 2 waterbodies**. You can view definitions and locations of these waterbodies on an interactive map by visiting gw.govt.nz/waterbodiesmap

If you are unsure about which type of waterbody you have on your property, please get in touch with us via your usual Land Management Advisor or info@gw.govt.nz

Low Slope Land

In mid-2024 the Government made amendments to the Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Regulations 2020 including revoking the provisions regulating beef cattle and deer on low slope land & revoking the provisions requiring stock on low slope land to be excluded from natural wetlands of 0.05 hectares or more. Therefore, **the low slope land** part of regulations no longer applies.

Types of Stock

These regulations do not include sheep, but they are included in our PNRP, which requires them to be excluded from Category 1 rivers and wetlands.

However, they must be supervised AND actively driven across the river. These requirements do not apply to sheep or farmed deer.



Setbacks

The national regulations require setbacks for stock including beef cattle, dairy cattle, dairy support cattle, farmed deer or pigs.

Stock will need to be setback by three metres from the beds of specified lakes, rivers and wetlands. If you are break feeding, cultivating, or intensive winter grazing, the required setback is five metres.

Existing Fences

A fence or riparian planting that was already in place on 3 September 2020 can remain in place if it meets the minimum standards and effectively excludes stock from a required waterway, even if it is less than 3 metres from the edge of the waterway. However, it will need to be maintained.

A 5m set back is required for intensive winter grazing of stock regardless of any existing fencing. This could be a temporary fence.

Drains, water races and highly modified watercourses

Water races –are not included in the national regulations, but our PNRP requires stock to be excluded from them because they are classed as **Category 2 Surface water bodies**.

There is no specified setback for this unless you are break feeding stock, which requires a five metre setback.

Highly modified watercourses - are included in the national regulations and may appear as drains.

Crossing waterways

All cattle and pigs may only cross a river or lake by using a dedicated bridge or culvert, unless they are:

- Supervised, and;
- Driven across the waterbody, and;
- Cross the waterbody no more than twice in any month.

Setback rules do not apply to stock accessing dedicated bridges or culverts.

Exceptions

Cattle and pigs can cross without a dedicated culvert or bridge if it is too difficult to install one because the river has a highly mobile bed. However, they must be supervised AND actively driven across the river. These requirements do not apply to sheep or farmed deer.



More information

visit: [gw.govt.nz/stockexclusion](https://www.gw.govt.nz/stockexclusion)

Contact us: info@gw.govt.nz OR 0800 496 734

Timeline for Stock Exclusion Requirements in the Wellington Region

Regulations apply to surface water bodies greater than 1 metre wide unless otherwise stated

2019



All stock excluded from **NRP category 1 wetlands**.
Sheep are included in this unless you have a resource consent.



All stock excluded from **NRP category 1 rivers**.

2022



Cattle, pigs and farmed deer excluded from **NRP category 2 surface water bodies**. *Except for Schedule F1 rivers less than 1 metre wide.*



Dairy cows excluded from **all other rivers**. *River width is measured at the stock access location.*

2023



Cattle, pigs and deer must be excluded from all wetlands identified in the NRP.



All dairy cattle, pigs, intensively grazed beef cattle and deer must be excluded from all lakes and rivers on any terrain.

2025



Dairy support cattle excluded from all lakes and rivers on **any terrain**.



Cattle, pigs and farmed deer excluded from **NRP Category 2 schedule F1 rivers less than 1 metre wide**.



At all times - If stock exclusion is not yet required, access of all stock to any river, lake, wetland, surface water body or coastal marine area shall not result in more than minor damage, or change in colour or clarity of water.

Regional Rules

National regulations

Refer to MFE for the low slope map of your property.

Key for stock



These regulations apply to sheep



Dairy support cattle



Dairy cattle



Beef cattle