



# Stock access to water bodies

Water bodies are places where inanga (whitebait) spawn, native birds nest, and where many endangered plants are found. They are also special places to mana whenua for activities such as gathering mahinga kai (foods). Both natural (such as rivers, streams, wetlands) and artificial water bodies (such as some drains) can have these values. **Uncontrolled stock access can damage the values of water bodies.**

Keeping all stock types out of water bodies improves water quality, enhances biodiversity, reduces the risk of stock loss and can contribute to better stock health. There are new regional rules **that will require stock exclusion from many water bodies in the region.**

Research has demonstrated stock access is a major source of bankside erosion, loss of riparian plant cover, increased stream temperature, degradation of aquatic habitat and a direct source of faecal pathogens and nutrients to water bodies.

**There are four main pollutants that can enter water bodies because of stock access:**

Pollutant	Why it's a problem	Source
Faecal matter	Viruses and bacteria (such as E. coli) in faecal matter create a human and animal health risk, as well as degrading cultural values.	Stock effluent in or near streams, surface runoff from paddocks. Pests defecating and urinating in native or forested catchments.
Nitrogen	Can promote algae growth to nuisance levels, which negatively impact on ecosystem health and recreational activities such as swimming. Can also degrade aquifers as sources of drinking water.	Urine from all stock, nitrogen in fertilisers.
Phosphorus	Can promote algae growth to nuisance levels, which contribute negatively impact on ecosystem health and recreational activities such as swimming.	Phosphorus in fertilisers, phosphorus attached to eroding soils and dung from stock.
Sediment	Can make water cloudy, smother fish or insect habitat, degrades shellfish beds and impacts negatively on recreational activities like swimming.	Erosion from stock trampling of stream beds and banks, overland runoff of eroding land in-paddock, heavy machinery and harvesting equipment in forestry blocks, roading and development.

## What can I do now?

You can find helpful information and tools available through farming industry bodies and from Greater Wellington. For example, these free industry tools are available to implement good riparian practices on all farm types:

- [Riparian planner](#) – to map out your farm’s waterways and create a riparian plan
- [EnviroWalk](#) - to assess environmental risks across the farm:

## Fencing

Fencing choice should reflect stock type and flooding risk, from temporary hot-wire or flood-proof fencing to permanent 7-wire post and battens. Setback should vary to take in critical source areas where runoff concentrates or springs emerge. Consider temporary fencing on ephemeral streams during periods of runoff.

## Beyond fencing

When excluding stock from waterways, install gates or access points to maintain riparian margins. Try to install bridges and culverts where stock regularly cross.

Consider planting or maintaining a grass filter:

- Grass filters are ideal on smaller waterways like drains or where erosion is limited to filter runoff.
- Plantings are better suited to controlling erosion or offering shade and habitat to freshwater biodiversity. Remember, even if planting, always keep at least a metre of grass filter around fencing – it helps enhance filtration of runoff and any plants risk being grazed that close.



## How can GWRC help?

Greater Wellington encourages good management practice by providing advice, technical support and financial assistance to landowners protecting water bodies.

We can work with you to identify your water bodies and develop a riparian or wetland management plan for protecting them.

Contact the Greater Wellington Land Management Department on 0800 4WN REG (0800 496 734) or email [info@gw.govt.nz](mailto:info@gw.govt.nz) for more information on how you can get advice and support.

## Is your farm eligible for funding?

High-priority waterways and wetlands have been identified through the proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP). Two types of water bodies have been prioritised for funding: Category 1 and Category 2 water bodies.

We have funding and support available to help with fencing, planting and, where appropriate, controlling pest plants and animals for Category 1 and Category 2 water bodies.

We also offer financial support in selected catchments and financial incentives on erosion-prone land.

## Does my land have a Category 1 or 2 waterway or wetland?

[Search](#) for your property on the Greater Wellington 'healthy waterways' web page, and find out. Most Water Accord waterways will qualify as Category 1 or 2 waterways.

Landowners with Category 1 water bodies should have been contacted by Greater Wellington already, but for more information contact Petra Fransen, Riparian Programme Coordinator, at 06 826 1589.

Category	Description
1	Streams, rivers and wetlands that have been identified as having significant values and can be home to vulnerable native plants and animals
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>estuaries that are not listed as Category 1</li><li>rivers that have an active bed width of 1 metre or wider</li><li>drains greater than 1-metre wide and water races that are mapped within the lowland areas shown on Map 29 of the pNRP (lowland area of Ruamahanga Catchment),</li><li>any river and stream not listed as a Category 1, but important for trout spawning (identified in Schedule 1 (trout habitat))</li><li>natural lakes</li></ul>

## Meeting new water quality and quantity rules

The proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP) combines Wellington region's five existing regional plans into a single document. It is our response to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management issued by central Government that requires all regional authorities to implement new policy to better manage water resources. Learn more about the pNRP.

**Until the pNRP is adopted, resource users must still comply with rules in the pNRP and current rules in the five existing plans.**

## Want to learn more?

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Other Greater Wellington resources:

- [Reducing impacts of winter grazing – native plant guide](#)
- [Monitoring](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)

Many industry bodies have developed guidance about good management practice for managing stock access to water bodies:

- [Beef & Lamb NZ: Managing stock around waterways](#)
- [Dairy NZ: Fencing waterways](#)
- [Deer Industry NZ: Managing riparian areas](#)
- [New Zealand Pork](#)

