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The Essential Freshwater Package

- Last Updated 08 Aug 2022

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What is the Essential Freshwater Package?

The New Zealand Government released its [Essential Freshwater Package in 2020\(external link\)](#). The purpose of this package is to protect our waterways, stop degradation and start improving them.

We held a Q&A with Environment Canterbury experts on Monday 1 August for the community to ask questions about how the Essential Freshwater Package will impact them.

What do I need to do?

- Protect wetlands from certain activities (anything that could damage or drain them) and apply for resource consent for most activities in or near wetlands
- [Exclude cattle](#) from certain types of waterways (e.g. wetlands, rivers, lakes)
- Develop and manage a [Freshwater Farm Plan](#) for any agricultural property larger than 20Ha
- Meet requirements for [fish passage](#) when installing new structures in the beds of rivers or streams
- Apply for a resource consent to reclaim a riverbed

You can find more information about the details of each of these points on the [Essential Freshwater page](#).

When do these things need to happen?

Now

Rules around protecting wetlands, applying for resources consents and meeting requirements are already in place. Please ensure you're doing these from now, (if you haven't been already!)

By 1 July 2025 | Stock exclusion regulations

The specific criteria around areas that need to follow the stock exclusion rules are currently under negotiation with the Government. We will inform you once this has been decided. When it is, affected areas will require:

- Farmed cattle to be excluded from wetlands that contain threatened species.
- Farmed cattle on low slope land to be excluded from lakes, rivers (at least 1m wide), and all other wetlands bigger than 500m².

From 2022 - Exact dates to be confirmed | Freshwater Farm Plans

- The Government is rolling out these requirements region by region from 2022. The Chatham Islands Council submitted that we would like the Chatham Islands to be one of the last regions to implement them.
- Plans will be required for all farms of at least 20ha.

Plans will need to include:

- A map identifying waterways, discharge sites, etc.
- Risk assessments for stock exclusion, offal pits, rubbish pits, etc.
- Actions to manage waterways and address risks.

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Plans will need to be:

- Approved by a qualified person
- Audited by independent auditors
- Enforced by Council.

More detailed information on the requirements can also be found on the [Essential Freshwater page](#).

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