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What are the new regulations?

Published 23 Feb 2024

The Essential Freshwater package is a new set of standards and regulations designed to achieve genuine freshwater improvements for our lakes, rivers, wetlands and other freshwater waterways within a generation.

The new rules apply to all farmers, in addition to the existing regional rules in the [Chatham Islands Resource Management Document](#) (CIRMD). They are being introduced in phases so you'll be able to prepare and adapt to them over a period of time. Below you'll find a timeline that gives an overview of the dates the different regulations come into effect, and information about specific regulations.

On this page you'll find information on the regulations that are relevant to current farming practices on the Islands. The other Essential Freshwater regulations cover synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use, intensive winter grazing, agricultural intensification, feedlots and stockholding areas, and metering for large water takes. This page will be updated if any of these regulations become relevant to the Islands.

Read more about the [Essential Freshwater package\(external link\)](#).

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Key dates for new regulations

3 September 2020:

- Wetlands
- River reclamation
- Fish passage
- Stock exclusion from new pastoral systems

1 July 2025:

- Stock exclusion from wetlands larger than 0.05 ha on low slope land, and from all wetlands containing threatened species
- Stock exclusion of beef cattle, deer and dairy support cattle on low slope land

Freshwater Farm Plans

All farms with 20 hectares or more in arable or pastoral use, 5 hectares or more in horticultural use and/or 20 hectares or more of combined use will require a certified Freshwater Farm Plan.

[Find out about the new requirement for a Freshwater Farm Plan for your farm.](#)

Wetland management

Any activity which disturbs wetlands can only be carried out for certain reasons, such as restoration, clearing debris or scientific research, and may require consent.

[Find out how the new rules might affect wetland management on your farm.](#)

Stock exclusion

Stock on new pastoral systems need to be excluded from lakes and wide rivers (rivers with a bed wider than one metre) with a three metre minimum setback. Stock must be fully excluded from wetlands.

[Find out how the new rules might affect stock exclusion on your farm.](#)

Fish passage

Culverts, weirs, flap gates, fords and dams must meet minimum reporting and environmental requirements such as height, width and location and may require resource consent.

[Find out how the new rules affect fish passage on your property.](#)

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Freshwater Farm Plans

Find out about the new requirement for a Freshwater Farm Plan for your farm.

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