

Chapter D Overlays - Natural Resources

<u>D8 Wetland Management Areas Overlay</u>
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<u>D9 Significant Ecological Areas Overlay</u>
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discharges, where these functions will not result in significant adverse effects on the ecological or cultural values of the wetland.

(3) Avoid activities in, on or adjacent to wetland management areas except where the activity:

(a) is for wetland conservation purposes, including pest removal;

(b) is for public access and interpretative activities relating to high natural character and ecological values; or

(c) is for operation, maintenance, upgrading or replacement of existing or new infrastructure;

provided significant adverse effects on the high natural character and ecological values of the wetland are avoided, and other adverse effects are avoided, remedied, mitigated or offset.

(4) Provide for infrastructure in, on, under or over the wetland management areas only where there is a functional or operational need to be in that location or traverse the area where there is no practicable alternative.

D9. Significant Ecological Areas Overlay

D9.1. Background

Auckland's indigenous biodiversity is unique with a diverse range of ecosystems reflecting the complex physical environment of the region. Natural ecosystems and indigenous biological diversity contribute to the character and identity of Auckland and distinguish it from other regions of New Zealand.

Healthy and functioning ecosystems contribute to improved water quality, soil conservation and carbon sinks, as well as providing opportunities for our recreation, economic, and cultural use. However, development has resulted in the loss of habitats and a reduction of biodiversity. Urban expansion and development, changes in coastal and rural land uses, and the ongoing degradation from pest species continue to threaten the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity.

In order to protect and better provide for the management of areas that contribute significantly to Auckland's biodiversity it is important to spatially identify them as significant ecological areas, in accordance with [B7.2](#) Indigenous biodiversity. Significant ecological areas have been identified for terrestrial areas, and parts of the coastal marine area.

D9.1.1. Significant Ecological Areas – Terrestrial (SEA-T)

Significant Ecological Areas – Terrestrial are identified areas of significant indigenous vegetation or significant habitats of indigenous fauna located either on land or in freshwater environments. In order to maintain indigenous biodiversity these areas are protected from the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development.

This overlay has been identified as a qualifying matter in accordance with sections 771(a) and 77O(a) of the RMA.

[Schedule 3 Significant Ecological Areas – Terrestrial Schedule](#) identifies the factors used to determine Significant Ecological Areas – Terrestrial and the values of scheduled areas.

The management of vegetation and biodiversity outside of identified significant ecological areas is subject to the provisions in [E15 Vegetation management and biodiversity](#).

The management of fresh waterbodies and riparian margins are subject to the provisions of Section [E3 Lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands](#).

Objective E28.2.(2) is to be considered alongside Objectives D9.2.(1)-(3) in relation to Policy D9.3.(8A).

With respect to excavation of minerals in a Special Purpose – Quarry Zone, policy D9.3(8A) recognises that it is not practicable to avoid adverse effects on the values of a SEA at Brookby Quarry, which is shown in Figure E15.10.1 Brookby Quarry extent, and Drury Quarry (excluding SEA_T_5349), which is shown in Figure

E15.10.2 Drury Quarry extent, and therefore these effects are required to be mitigated or offset.

D9.1.2. Significant Ecological Areas – Marine (SEA-M)

Significant Ecological Areas – Marine are identified areas of significant indigenous vegetation or significant habitats of indigenous fauna located in the coastal marine area.

[Schedule 4 Significant Ecological Areas – Marine Schedule](#) identifies the factors used to determine Significant Ecological Areas – Marine and the values of scheduled areas.

The following categories of significant ecological areas in the coastal marine area are identified in [Schedule 4 Significant Ecological Areas – Marine Schedule](#) and on the planning maps:

SEA-M: Significant Ecological Area – Marine

SEA-M1: Areas which, due to their physical form, scale or inherent values, are considered to be the most vulnerable to any adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

SEA-M2: Areas are of regional, national or international significance which do not warrant an SEA-M1 identification as they are generally more robust.

SEA-M1w, SEA-M2w: Areas that are identified as significant wading bird areas.

Coastal and marine ecosystems are subject to change, damage or destruction from inappropriate subdivision, use and development, as well as natural processes. The quality of the coastal environment is fundamentally determined by the presence of a diversity of ecosystems and by their ability to function as biological systems.

The management of indigenous biodiversity and marine ecosystems outside of scheduled significant ecological areas are subject to the objectives and policies in [E15 Vegetation management and biodiversity](#), and to the vegetation management provisions in Chapter F Coastal.

D9.1.3. Rules for significant ecological areas

The rules that apply to Significant Ecological Areas – Terrestrial are contained in:

- [E3 Lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands](#) (overlay rules);
- [E15 Vegetation management and biodiversity](#) (overlay rules);
- [E11 Land disturbance - Regional](#) (overlay rules); and
- [E26 Infrastructure](#) (overlay rules).

The rules that apply to Significant Ecological Areas – Marine are contained in:

- Chapter F Coastal (rules are through various activity sections).

D9.2. Objectives [rcp/rp/dp]

- (1) Areas of significant indigenous biodiversity value in terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal marine areas are protected from the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development.
- (2) Indigenous biodiversity values of significant ecological areas are enhanced.
- (3) The relationship of Mana Whenua and their customs and traditions with indigenous vegetation and fauna is recognised and provided for.

D9.3. Policies [rcp/rp/dp]

Managing effects on significant ecological areas – terrestrial and marine

- (1) Manage the effects of activities on the indigenous biodiversity values of areas identified as significant ecological areas by:
 - (a) avoiding adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity in the coastal environment to the extent stated in Policies D9.3(9) and (10);
 - (b) avoiding other adverse effects as far as practicable, and where avoidance is not practicable, minimising adverse effects on the identified values;
 - (c) remedying adverse effects on the identified values where they cannot be avoided;
 - (d) mitigating adverse effects on the identified values where they cannot be avoided or remediated; and
 - (e) considering the appropriateness of offsetting any residual adverse effects that are significant and where they have not been able to be mitigated, through protection, restoration and enhancement measures, having regard to [Appendix 8 Biodiversity offsetting](#).
- (2) Adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity values in significant ecological areas that are required to be avoided, remedied, mitigated or offset may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
 - (a) fragmentation of, or a reduction in the size and extent of, indigenous ecosystems and the habitats of indigenous species;
 - (b) fragmentation or disruption of connections between ecosystems or habitats;
 - (c) changes which result in increased threats from pests on indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems;
 - (d) loss of buffering of indigenous ecosystems;
 - (e) loss of a rare or threatened individual, species population or habitat;

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- (f) loss or degradation of originally rare ecosystems including wetlands, dune systems, lava forests, coastal forests;
 - (g) a reduction in the abundance of individuals within a population, or natural diversity of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna;
 - (h) loss of ecosystem services;
 - (i) effects which contribute to a cumulative loss or degradation of habitats, species populations and ecosystems;
 - (j) impacts on species or ecosystems that interact with other activities, or impacts that exacerbate or cause adverse effects in synergistic ways;
 - (k) loss of, or damage to, ecological mosaics, sequences, processes, or integrity;
 - (l) downstream effects on wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes from hydrological changes further up the catchment;
 - (m) a modification of the viability or value of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna as a result of the use or development of other land, freshwater, or coastal resources;
 - (n) a reduction in the historical, cultural, and spiritual association held by Mana Whenua or the wider community;
 - (o) the destruction of, or significant reduction in, educational, scientific, amenity, historical, cultural, landscape, or natural character values;
 - (p) disturbance to indigenous fauna that is likely or known to increase threats, disturbance or pressures on indigenous fauna; or
 - (q) increases in the extinction probability of a species.
- (3) Enhance indigenous biodiversity values in significant ecological areas through any of the following:
- (a) restoration, protection and enhancement of threatened ecosystems and habitats for rare or threatened indigenous species;
 - (b) control, and where possible, eradication of plant and animal pests;
 - (c) fencing of significant ecological areas to protect them from stock impacts;
 - (d) legal protection of significant ecological areas through covenants or similar mechanisms;
 - (e) development and implementation of management plans to address adverse effects;

