



For now &
our future

Southland's scattered wetlands; the results from a regional inventory

Mark Oster *Biodiversity programme leader*

Acknowledgements

- Richard Ewans (Eco South)
- Chris Stowe (Urtica)
- James Dare (previously ES)
- Nick Ward (ES)
- Southland District Council



Main messages

- Wetlands are
 - amazing
 - decreasing in area
 - declining in quality
- Active management is needed to reverse the trend



Background

- Wetlands
 - perform ecosystem services
 - support indigenous and rare species
- ≈ 90% of wetlands have been lost since the mid-1800s
- Little recent data is available regionally on wetland health
- Confusion over wetland extent



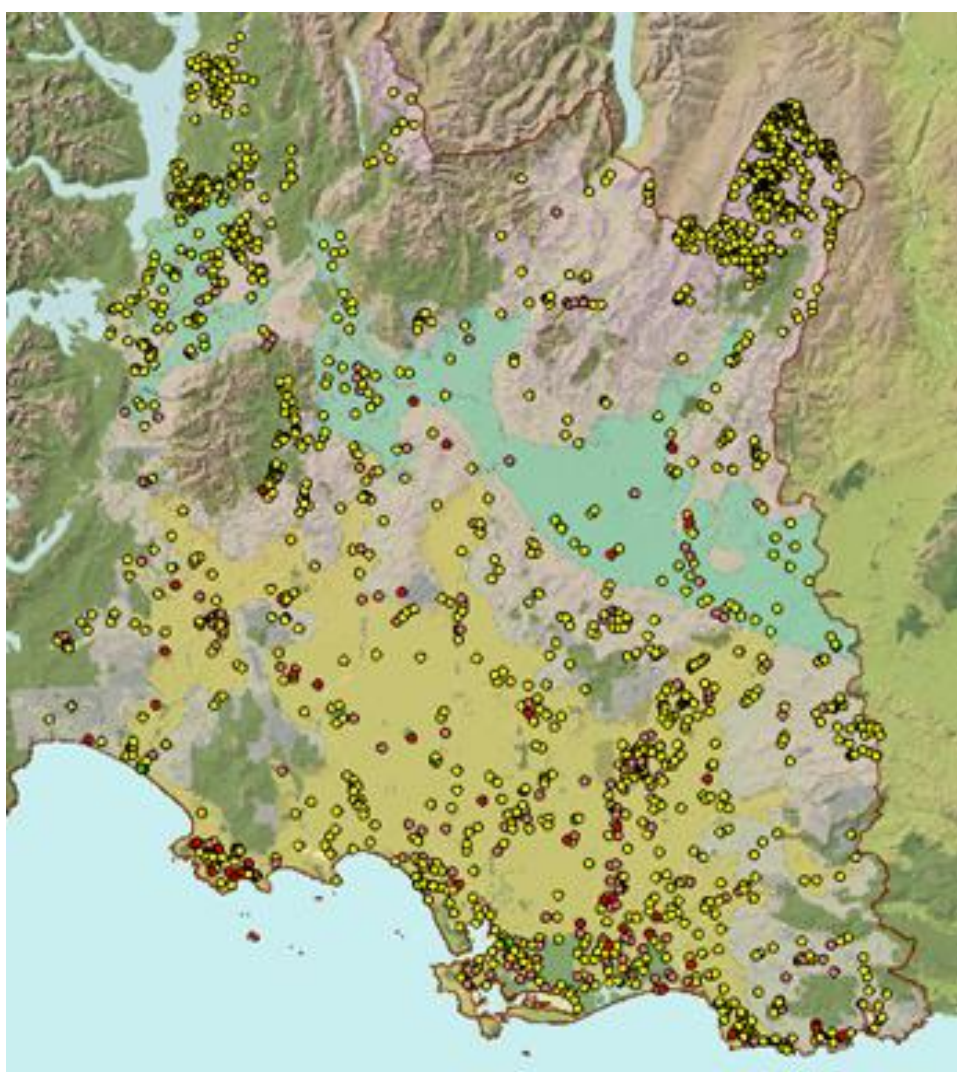
Inventory: mapping



2007



2014



Wetland ecological surveys



High value areas - results

2011-2018

146 Wetlands

- >2000 ha in total
- >1000 ha grazed
- 100% surveys found weeds

- 400 ha receiving weed control
- 500 ha receiving animal pest control



It's not all bad

- 63 HVA wetland sites have threatened species
- 17 QEII/Reserves



Australasian bittern. Adult walking through pasture. Eastern Southland, August 2015. Image © Glenda Rees by Glenda Rees

Reversing the trend

- Community groups
- Working with landowners
- Artificial wetlands
- ES land



Conclusions

- Despite legal protection Southland has lost wetlands since 2007
- Wetland loss means a loss of ecosystem services
- The wetlands that remain face a number of threats:
 - weeds, drainage, animal pests and grazing
- Only active management will protect our remaining wetlands
- Despite over 10 years of work we have only carried out HVA assessments on 10% of wetlands on private land