



# National Wetlands Inventory Program Overview

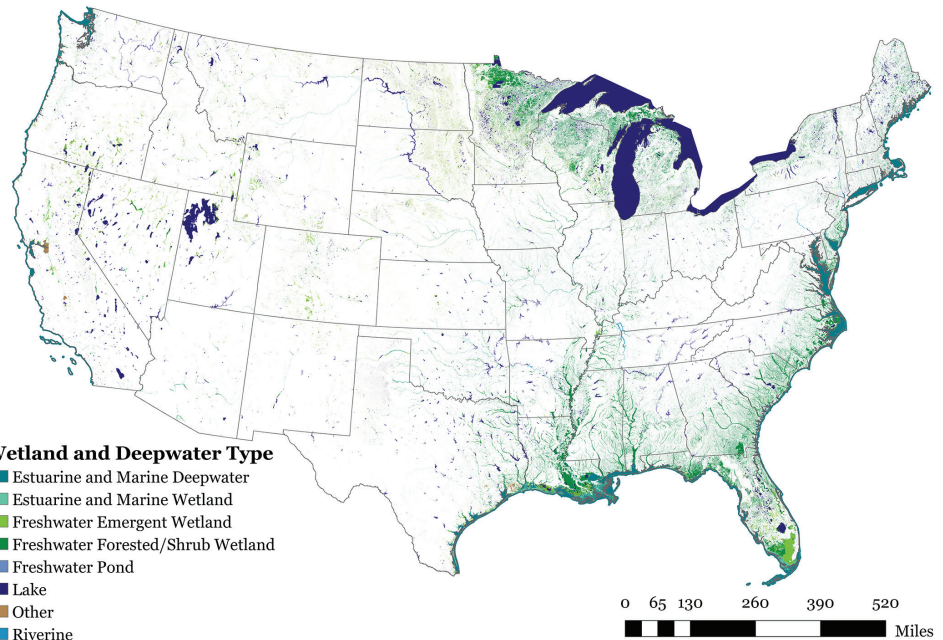
*The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) provides users with scientifically-based information on wetlands and deepwater habitats to promote the understanding and conservation of the Nation's wetland resources through research, education, resource management and policy development.*

## Overview

Recognizing the importance of wetlands to the safety and well-being of all Americans, as well as the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, Congress enacted the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-645). This legislation requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to map U.S. wetlands, as well as conduct decadal national wetlands status and trends studies and report the findings to Congress. These mandates are carried out by the Service's NWI Program. NWI provides publicly available information on the abundance, characteristics and distribution of American wetland and deepwater habitats, as well as changes in these habitats through time. NWI data are used by natural resource managers and decision-makers in the government, non-profit and commercial sectors, as well as the general public. This information is provided through two primary datasets: the NWI geospatial dataset and Wetlands Status and Trends reports.

## Geospatial Dataset

The geospatial dataset is a digital representation of the location, type and extent of the Nation's wetland and deepwater habitats. The dataset supports a wide array of applications, including the U.S. Endangered Species Act, water quality modeling, infrastructure development planning, waterfowl population modeling and more. The dataset is publicly available



*Location, type and extent of wetlands and deepwater habitats in the conterminous United States as mapped by NWI. Credit: USFWS*

via the online Wetlands Mapper, a trusted resource that is visited by over half a million users annually. The Mapper allows users to view, query and print wetlands data.

Data can also be downloaded or accessed through web mapping services. In addition, the Service has developed online tools and other resources aimed at supporting analysis of the geospatial dataset, and provides technical expertise to users as needed. Data are available for the conterminous United States, Hawaii, U.S. territories and more than 40 percent of Alaska.

## Status and Trends

Wetlands Status and Trends reports comprise the monitoring component of the NWI Program. These reports provide critical information on recent and historical changes in wetland and deepwater habitat type and acreage at both the national and regional levels. The reports provide valuable information on the effectiveness of

current policies and management strategies, and guide the development of new U.S. aquatic resource policies.

To date, five national reports and seven regional reports have been completed, including reports on coastal watersheds and the Prairie Pothole region. NWI is currently in the process of completing the sixth national report due for publication in 2022.

Visit <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/> for additional information on NWI. For general questions, email [wetlands\\_team@fws.gov](mailto:wetlands_team@fws.gov).

**U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041  
703-358-2171  
[www.fws.gov/ecological-services](http://www.fws.gov/ecological-services)**

**August 2020**