

THE WETLANDS BILL
(No. XIV of 2026)

Explanatory Memorandum

The main object of this Bill is to provide for the protection, conservation and enhancement of wetlands and wetland ecosystem services.

2. Accordingly, the Bill makes provisions, inter alia, for –

- (a) the establishment of a mechanism for the creation, conservation, protection and enhancement of the ecological character of all wetlands on both State lands and private-owned lands in the Republic of Mauritius;
- (b) the identification and establishing management goals for wetlands for the protection and conservation of their ecosystem services and biodiversity;
- (c) providing a framework for the listing of wetlands under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) and the protection, conservation and enhancement of any other wetland on both State lands and private-owned lands;
- (d) the integration of ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the management of wetlands;
- (e) providing a framework for making consistent, equitable and informed decisions with regard wetlands;
- (f) monitoring and reporting on the condition of all wetlands in the Republic of Mauritius.

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31 July 2026

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A BILL

**To provide for the protection, conservation and enhancement
of wetlands and wetland ecosystem services**

ENACTED by the Parliament of Mauritius, as follows –

PART I – PRELIMINARY

1. Short title

This Act be cited as the Wetlands Act 2026.

2. Interpretation

In this Act –

“activity” means –

- (a) any development or undertaking with regard to wetlands;
- (b) the draining or filling of any wetland or its buffer zone;
- (c) the cutting, removing, pruning, pollarding or lopping or otherwise interfering with any flora within any wetland or in its buffer zone, excluding silviculture activities undertaken by the Forestry Service;
- (d) the introduction of an invasive alien species in any wetland or its buffer zone;
- (e) fishing or hunting activities of any species in any wetland or its buffer zone;
- (f) the carrying out of any activity in any wetland or its buffer zone, except for the purpose of creating new habitats for wildlife;
- (g) the discharge of untreated waste water, pollutants or effluents in a wetland or its buffer zone, or permitting any material or waste to be placed in such manner that shall affect the whole or any part of the wetland or its buffer zone;
- (h) excavation activity in a wetland or its buffer zone, except for the purpose of restoration or creating new habitats for wildlife;
- (i) the construction of any temporary or permanent structure in any wetland or its buffer zone, except when such construction is approved under this Act as part of conservation and awareness activities, including birdwatching and walkways for nature trails; and
- (j) any other activity that has, will have or is likely to have a detrimental impact on the ecological character of any wetland and its buffer zone;

“animal” includes an animal from any species, animal parts or derivatives, fauna, fish, aquatic animal, shellfish and egg;

“artificial wetlands” means any non-natural, including man-made waterbody, situated above high-water mark that provides ecological characteristics;

“authorised officer” –

- (a) means an officer of the National Parks and Conservation Service; and
- (b) includes a police officer, forest officer, fisheries officer or any other person designated by the supervising officer;

“buffer zone” means a set back up to 100 metres from the edge of a wetland when at its fullest;

“Committee” means the National Wetlands Committee set up under section 4;

“conservation” –

- (a) means the use of any method or process necessary to maintain the natural functions, biodiversity, habitat and amenity of wildlife and reserved lands; and
- (b) includes any activity associated with scientific resources management such as research, census, law enforcement, habitat restoration, acquisition and maintenance, propagation, live trapping, translocation and transplantation;

“development” –

- (a) means the carrying out of any building, engineering, mining, or other works or operations in, on, under or over land, or the making of any material change to the use of land or to any building or morcellement; and
- (b) includes –
 - (i) the use of land;
 - (ii) a morcellement;
 - (iii) the erection of a building;
 - (iv) the carrying out of any work;
 - (v) the demolition of a building or work;
 - (vi) the construction of roads and parking area; and
 - (vii) any other act, matter or thing that is controlled by a planning instrument;

“discharge” has the same meaning as in the Environment Act 2024;

“Director” means the Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service;

“ecological” –

- (a) means the variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; and
- (b) includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems;

“ecological character” means the combination of the ecosystem components, processes, benefits and services that characterises the wetland;

“enforcement notice” means a notice referred in section 19;

“Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal” means the Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal established under section 3(1) of the Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal Act;

“fish” has the same meaning as in the Fisheries Act 2023;

“flora” –

- (a) means all plants; and
- (b) includes fungi and bacteria;

“freshwater” means naturally occurring water on the earth’s surface in bogs, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, canals and all water courses, including rivers and streams;

“invasive alien species” means animals, microorganisms and plants which may threaten ecosystems, habitats, species and human beings;

“land” –

- (a) means land covered by waters; and
- (b) includes the atmosphere above the surface of the land and the soil which extends downwards to the centre of the earth;

“member” –

- (a) means a member of the Committee; and
- (b) includes the Chairperson;

“Minister” means the Minister to whom the responsibility for the subject of wetlands is assigned;

“Ministry” means the Ministry responsible for the subject of wetlands;

“National Parks and Conservation Service” means the National Parks and Conservation Service established under the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act;

“native species” means a species endemic to Mauritius that occurs naturally with respect to a particular ecosystem, rather than as a result of an accidental or a deliberate introduction into that ecosystem by humans;

“permit” means a permit issued under section 17(3);

“person” means –

- (a) an individual, a corporation, a partnership, a trust, an association or any other private entity;
- (b) any other entity subject to the jurisdiction of Mauritius;

“person affected” means a person on whom a notice is, or is proposed to be, served;

“pollutant” has the same meaning as in the Environment Act 2024;

“private wetland” means any private-owned land designated as such under section 13;

“prohibition notice” means a notice referred to under section 20;

“Ramsar Convention” means the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, also known as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;

“Ramsar Site” means a site designated as such under section 11(1);

“silviculture” –

- (a) means the practice of controlling the growth, composition, structure and quality of forests; and
- (b) includes the harvesting of forest produce, site preparation, establishment and management of forest stands;

“stop order” means an order referred to in section 21;

“supervising officer” means the supervising officer of the Ministry;

“unnatural function” means human induced changes in wetland ecosystem services, including, but not limited to, changes in water levels, water source, biological, chemical, ecological and physical parameters;

“waste” has the same meaning as in the Local Government Act;

“waste water” has the same meaning as in the Waste Water Management Authority Act;

“wetlands” means areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, which occur naturally, whether permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salty;

“Wetland Management Plan” the Wetland Management Plan referred to in section 18;

“wetland of international importance” means a wetland which satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in the Ramsar Convention for identifying wetlands of international importance adopted by the Conference of Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention;

“wise use of wetlands” means the protection, conservation, preservation, enhancement and use of wetlands while ensuring no reduction in their ecological character.

3. Application of Act

This Act shall bind the State.

PART II – NATIONAL WETLANDS COMMITTEE

4. National Wetlands Committee

(1) There shall be set up, for the purposes of this Act, a National Wetlands Committee.

(2) The Committee shall be responsible for matters related to wetlands.

(3) The Committee shall consist of –

(a) the supervising officer, as Chairperson;

(b) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of environment;

- (c) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of fisheries;
- (d) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of housing and lands;
- (e) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of local government;
- (f) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of water resources;
- (g) the Conservator of Forests or his representative;
- (h) a representative of the Land Drainage Authority; and
- (i) 3 persons having wide experience in matters pertaining to wetland management and conservation, to be appointed by the Minister.

(4) The Director or his representative shall be in attendance at any meeting of the Committee.

(5) (a) The Committee may, on an ad hoc basis, co-opt such member with an expertise in such field as may be required.

(b) A member co-opted under paragraph (a) shall, as and when required, attend a meeting of the Committee but shall have no right to vote.

(6) Any member, including any co-opted member, shall be paid such fees and allowances as the Minister may determine.

5. Functions of Committee

The Committee shall –

- (a) make recommendations to the Minister on the designation and management of wetlands;
- (b) make recommendations on the listing of wetlands in accordance with the Ramsar Convention;
- (c) ensure that the ecological characteristics of wetlands are maintained and enhanced;
- (d) review any application and other development matter under this Act or any other relevant enactment that is related to wetlands;

- (e) make recommendations to the Minister in respect of applications for permits made under this Act or any other relevant enactment;
- (f) ensure that the terms and conditions of any permit issued under this Act are complied with; and
- (g) advise the Minister on matters pertaining to –
 - (i) the development and implementation of national wetlands policies and strategies;
 - (ii) the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan prepared by the Ramsar Convention for the conservation, protection and wise use of wetlands;
 - (iii) the implementation of Wetlands Management Plan;
 - (iv) funds to be provided in respect of matters related to wetlands; and
 - (v) such other matter that the Minister considers relevant under this Act.

6. Meetings of Committee

- (1) The Committee shall meet –
 - (a) at such interval as the Chairperson may determine or the Ministry may request, but at least once every month; and
 - (b) at such time and place as the Chairperson Committee may determine.
- (2) At any meeting of the Committee, 7 members shall constitute a quorum.
- (3) The Committee shall regulate its meetings and proceedings in such manner as it may determine.

7. Appointment of subcommittees

- (1) The Committee may set up such subcommittees as may be necessary to assist it in discharge of its functions under this Act.
- (2) A subcommittee –

- (a) may comprise of not less than 3 nor more than 8 members, to be appointed by the Committee on such terms and conditions as it may determine;
- (b) may co-opt, with the approval of the Committee, ~~any~~ such other person as it considers necessary;
- (c) shall meet –
 - (i) at such time, and regulate its meetings in such manner, as the Committee may determine; and
 - (ii) at such place as the chairperson of the subcommittee may determine.

8. Disclosure of interest

(1) Where a member, including a co-opted member, has an interest, direct or indirect, in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the Committee, he shall disclose to the Committee the nature of his interest, and shall not take part in any deliberation or decision of the Committee with respect to that matter.

(2) A disclosure of interest made under subsection (1) shall be recorded in the minutes of proceedings of the Committee.

9. Powers of Minister

(1) For the purpose of conserving and protecting wetlands, the Minister may give such directions to the Committee, in relation to its powers under this Act, as he considers necessary.

(2) The Minister may request the Director to furnish such information, in such manner and at such time, as he considers necessary and the Director shall furnish the information.

(3) The Minister may give such directions of a general character to the Director, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers necessary in the public interest and the Director shall comply with those directions.

10. Functions of National Parks and Conservation Service

The National Parks and Conservation Service shall –

- (a) collect baseline and monitoring data for wetlands, every 5 years and to understand the ecological characteristics of wetlands;

- (b) review and update maps of all wetlands;
- (c) monitor all activities in all wetlands and, following the review of the Committee, advise the relevant authorities as regards future course of actions;
- (d) facilitate coordination between all stakeholders engaged in the wise use of wetlands;
- (e) promote research and education regarding wetlands;
- (f) process applications for wetland restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement projects; and
- (g) do all such other things as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of any of its objects under this Act.

PART III – CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS

11. Designation of Ramsar Sites

(1) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Committee, designate, by Proclamation, any State land or private-owned land as a Ramsar Site.

(2) Any State land or private-owned land designated as a Ramsar Site pursuant to subsection (1) shall be listed in the First Schedule.

12. Designation of Nationally Important and Other Wetlands

(1) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Committee, designate, by Proclamation, any State land or private-owned land as a Nationally Important and Other Wetland where –

- (a) the ecological character of the wetland includes, but is not limited to, its natural, scenic, scientific, educational, recreational value or such other ecological character as the Committee may determine;
- (b) the restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement of the wetland would make the wetland of national importance;
- (c) the preservation of that wetland is necessary to conserve, protect, rehabilitate and enhance the wetland.

(2) Wetlands of category I shall be used strictly for the purpose of conservation, protection, restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement of the wetland.

(3) Wetlands of category II shall be used for conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, enhancement and educational activities.

(4) Wetlands of category III shall be used for approved recreational purposes.

(5) Wetlands of category IV shall be used for such commercial purposes as may be prescribed by the Minister.

(6) Notwithstanding any other enactment, no activity or development shall take place on any wetland or its buffer zones, unless –

- (a) prior written approval of the Minister is obtained; or
- (b) the activity or development is authorised under section 18.

13. Designation of private wetlands

(1) For the purpose of –

- (a) protecting, enhancing or restoring the ecological character of a private-owned land, or protecting, enhancing or restoring wildlife habitat or habitat of rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species utilising the private-owned land;
- (b) retaining significant botanical, zoological, geological or morphological features of a private-owned land; or
- (c) conserving air, soil or water,

the Minister may, on the recommendation of the Committee, designate such private-owned land as private wetland.

(2) Where the Minister designates any private-owned land as a private wetland, the Director shall forthwith inform the owner and occupier of that land accordingly in writing.

14. Ownership of private wetland

(1) The ownership of a private-owned land, designated as a private wetland, shall remain vested in its owner.

(2) Any owner of a private-owned land, designated as a private wetland, who intends to alter or sell that land shall, in writing, seek the prior approval of the Minister.

(3) Where the Committee has reason to believe that a private wetland should be compulsorily acquired for the purpose of protecting it and its ecosystem services, the Minister may make a recommendation to that effect to the Minister responsible for the subject of lands.

(4) Where the Minister responsible for the subject of lands is satisfied that the compulsory acquisition of the private wetland shall be in the national interest, the Minister may acquire the private wetland and its buffer zone in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act.

15. Maintenance of private wetland

(1) Every owner or occupier of a private wetland shall maintain the wetland in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) Where the Director is satisfied that the owner or occupier of a private wetland is unable to maintain the wetland in such manner as may be prescribed, he may provide to the owner or occupier such assistance as he considers appropriate.

16. Buffer zones

(1) The Minister may, by notice published in the Gazette, declare any land adjoining a private wetland, or any other land within a radius of not less than 30 metres nor more than 100 metres, to be a buffer zone.

(2) The buffer zone shall commence from the edge of the private wetland when it is at its fullest.

(3) Notwithstanding any other enactment, a buffer zone shall not, except with the approval of the Minister on the recommendation of the Committee, and subject to such conditions as the Minister may impose, be put to any use which may have a negative impact, whether direct or indirect or cumulative, on the private wetland and its buffer zone, or the ecological character of the private wetland and its buffer zone.

(4) Where there is any structure on a portion of land within a radius of 30 metres from a private wetland, the Minister may, on the recommendation of the Committee, take such decision as may be appropriate.

17. Activities within wetland or buffer zone

(1) (a) No person shall conduct any activity on a wetland or its buffer zone unless he holds a permit.

(b) Any person who conducts an activity on a wetland or its buffer zone shall commit an offence.

(c) Any person who intends to conduct an activity in a wetland or its buffer zone shall make an application in writing to the Director.

(d) The application under paragraph (c) shall specify the type of activity the applicant intends to conduct.

(2) (a) On receipt of an application, the Director shall refer it to the Committee for its advice.

(b) For the purpose of this section, the Committee may request the applicant to provide such documentary evidence as it considers necessary.

(c) On receipt of the advice of the Committee, the Director shall make such recommendations as he thinks fit to the Minister.

(3) (a) The Minister may approve or reject the application.

(b) Where the Minister approves the application, he shall, on payment of such fee as may be prescribed, issue a permit on such terms and conditions as he may determine.

(c) Where the Minister rejects the application, he shall, within 7 days of his decision, inform the applicant accordingly.

(4) Any person who is authorised to conduct any activity on a wetland or its buffer zone shall comply with such terms and conditions as the Minister may impose.

(5) No person shall, on a wetland or its buffer zone, conduct any activity in such manner as it may, directly or indirectly, adversely affect the buffer zone.

(6) Any person who contravenes any terms and conditions of a permit shall commit an offence.

18. Wetland Management Plan

(1) (a) The Director shall, in respect of every wetland designated as Ramsar Site, prepare a Wetland Management Plan and submit to the Committee for its recommendations.

(b) The Committee shall, within 30 days of receipt of the Wetland Management Plan, submit its recommendations.

(2) The Director shall, within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations of the Committee, submit the Wetland Management Plan to the Minister for his approval.

(3) (a) The Director shall, following the approval by the Minister, cause a notice be published in the Gazette and at least 2 daily newspapers –

- (i) informing the public that the Wetland Management Plan may be inspected, or a copy thereof obtained on payment of such fee as may be prescribed; and
- (ii) requiring the public to make such representations as it may wish within 60 days of the publication of the notice.

(b) The representations shall be made in such form and manner as may be specified in the notice.

(4) On receipt of the representations under subsection (3) and, after consultation with the Committee, the Director –

- (a) may review the Wetland Management Plan and make such modifications and adaptations to as may be required; and
- (b) shall submit the Wetland Management Plan to the Minister for his approval.

(5) Where the Minister approves the Wetland Management Plan, the Director shall cause it to be published in the Gazette.

(6) A Wetland Management Plan may be reviewed at such regular interval as the Minister may determine.

(7) The National Parks and Conservation Service shall be responsible for the implementation of the Wetland Management Plan.

19. Enforcement notice

(1) Where the Director, on the advice of the Committee, is of the opinion that a person has contravened, is contravening or is likely to contravene this Act, he may cause an enforcement notice to be served on that person.

(2) An enforcement notice shall –

- (a) state the opinion of the Director for issuing the enforcement notice;
- (b) specify the matter constituting the contravention, or the matter making it likely that the contravention will arise, as the case may be;
- (c) specify the measures that shall be taken to remedy the contravention, or to remedy or eliminate the matter making it likely that the contravention will arise, as the case may be; and
- (d) specify a period within which these measures shall be implemented.

(3) (a) The enforcement notice shall be valid for such period as may be specified therein.

(b) No person shall be prosecuted for a contravention in respect of which an enforcement notice was issued as long as that notice is in force.

(4) Any person who fails to comply with an enforcement notice shall commit an offence.

20. Prohibition notice

(1) Where the Director is of the opinion that the manner in which activity is carried out may –

- (a) cause damage to the ecological character of a wetland or its buffer zone; or
- (b) constitutes an imminent risk of damage to a wetland or its buffer zone,

the Director may cause to be served a prohibition notice on the person carrying out that activity.

(2) A prohibition notice shall –

- (a) specify –
 - (i) the damage caused to the wetland and its buffer zone;

- (ii) the risk of adverse effect that the manner the activity is carried out may have on the ecological character of the wetland;
- (b) specify the measures that should be taken to –
 - (i) repair the damage caused to the wetland; or
 - (ii) avoid any risk of damage to the wetland; and
 - (iii) the timeframe within which the measures should be taken.
- (c) specify the activity, or any aspect of the activity, that should not be conducted; and
- (d) specify any condition subject to which the activity may be resumed.

(3) Any person who fails to comply with a prohibition notice shall commit an offence.

21. Stop order

(1) Where a person carries out any activity on a wetland or its buffer zone without a permit, the Director shall cause to be served, on that person, or any person responsible for giving of instructions for the carrying out of such activity, a stop order prohibiting the activity as set out in the Second Schedule.

(2) Any person who fails to comply with a stop order shall commit an offence.

22. Variation of notice

(1) Any person who is aggrieved by an enforcement notice, a prohibition notice or a stop order may make an application to the Director for a variation of the enforcement notice, prohibition notice or stop order.

(2) The Director may, after consultation with the Committee, vary an enforcement notice, a prohibition notice or a stop order, as the case may be, and cause a variation notice to be served on the person.

- (3) A variation notice shall specify –
 - (a) the remedial measures to be taken;

- (b) the timeframe within which paragraph (a) should be complied with; and
- (c) the form and manner by, and the timeframe within, which the Director should be informed accordingly.

23. Revocation of notice

(1) Where the Director is satisfied that remedial measures specified in the variation notice referred to in section 22 have been taken, he may revoke the notice and inform the person accordingly.

(2) The revocation of the notice shall be without prejudice to any action, including the prosecution for an offence, which may be undertaken under this Act.

24. Judge's order

(1) Where a person fails to comply with any notice or order under this Act, the Judge in Chambers may, on an *ex parte* application by the Director, make such interim order as he deems fit.

(2) Where a person –

- (a) refuses or prevents the Director or an authorised officer from entering or gaining access to a dwelling house or to any land or premises for the purpose of discharging his functions and exercising his powers under the Act; or
- (b) obstructs or hinders or prevents the Director or an authorised officer from discharging his functions and exercising his powers under the Act,

the Director or the authorised officer may apply to the Judge in Chambers for an order authorising him to enter and inspect any dwelling house, land or premises or to exercise any power under this Act.

(3) The Judge in Chambers may, on being satisfied that it is necessary for the Director or the authorised officer to exercise any power under the Act, issue an order authorising the Director or the authorised officer to enter and inspect any dwelling house, land or premises or to exercise powers without any hinderance, obstruction or impediment on the part of any person.

25. Offences

(1) Any person who –

- (a) undertakes an activity without a permit;

- (b) fails to comply with any requirement, notice, order or direction issued under this Act;
- (c) submits a false report or submits a report misleading in any material or particular with respect to a permit and any other activity;
- (d) provides false or misleading information; or
- (e) otherwise contravenes this Act or any regulations made under it,

shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 500,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(2) Where a person commits an offence in relation to a Ramsar Site and its buffer zone, the person shall –

- (a) on a first conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 500,000 rupees and not exceeding one million rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months;
- (b) on a second or subsequent conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 5 million rupees and not exceeding 10 million rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

(3) Where a person commits an offence in relation to a Nationally Important and Other Wetland, the person shall –

- (a) on a first conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 150,000 rupees and not exceeding 500,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve 12 months;
- (b) on a second or subsequent conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 500,000 rupees and not exceeding 5 million rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(4) Where a person commits an offence in relation to any other wetland under category ,I the person shall –

- (a) on a first conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 50,000 rupees and not exceeding 250,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months;

- (b) on a second or subsequent conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 250,000 rupees and not exceeding one million rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(5) In addition to any penalty under subsections (2) and (3), the Court may order the convicted person to restore the wetland or buffer zone, as the case may be, to its natural state.

PART IV – POWERS OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

26. Powers of authorised officers

(1) Where a person is found committing an offence within any wetland or its buffer zone, an authorised officer may require that person to forthwith leave the area.

(2) An authorised officer may seize anything which he reasonably suspects is the object of or could be used as evidence of an offence under this Act.

(3) An authorised officer may take photographs, make inventories or do such other things necessary for the collection of evidence regarding the commission of an offence.

(4) Where a person refuses to do anything that an authorised officer requires under subsection (1), (2) or (3), he shall commit an offence under the Act.

27. Powers of entry, search, seizure and arrest

(1) Where a Magistrate is satisfied by information sworn on oath that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence has, is being, or is about to be, committed under this Act, the Magistrate may issue a warrant authorising an authorised officer to enter any land or premises and search for any evidence which is the subject matter of the offence.

(2) The Police shall, in addition to the powers conferred upon it under the Police Act, assist an authorised officer in respect of –

- (a) service of notices;
- (b) inspection and entry to premises;
- (c) disconnection of waste water works; or

- (d) such other matter as may be necessary for the administration of this Act.

(3) Where a person is found carrying out an activity in breach of this Act on any wetland or in its buffer zone, an authorised officer may enter the land and, without a warrant, take such actions as may be necessary.

(4) Where a police officer not below the rank of Inspector, or an authorised officer, has reasonable ground to suspect that an offence is being committed or is about to be committed, and is satisfied that it is impracticable, in the circumstances, to seek a warrant from a Magistrate, he may, without a warrant –

- (a) enter and search any premises;
- (b) stop and search any vehicle;
- (c) seize any equipment or other device used in contravention of this Act, together with any vehicle used to assist in or facilitate such contravention;
- (d) seize any other material that could be considered as evidence obtained or possessed in contravention of this Act.

(5) For the purposes of this Act, an authorised officer may, at any time, enter –

- (a) any buffer zone; or
- (b) any land which it is convenient or expedient to cross in order to reach any wetland and its buffer zone.

(6) Any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed an offence under this Act may be arrested without a warrant by a police officer.

(7) Any equipment, device or anything obtained from the use of that equipment or device, found in the possession of a person arrested under subsection (6) may be seized.

(8) Where a seizure is effected under subsection (7) by the owner or occupier of the land on which the offence has been committed or by a person authorised by the owner or occupier, the seized equipment, device or product shall be remitted forthwith to an authorised officer.

(9) An authorised officer referred to in subsection (8) may dispose of any product of a perishable nature.

(10) Any expense incurred as a result of a seizure, including custody costs, the costs of transporting during the time of seizure shall be recoverable from the offender.

(11) Where a person commits an offence under this Part, any cage, container, boat, aeroplane, vehicle or any other article or equipment in respect of which or by means of which the offence was committed, shall be forfeited.

PART V – MISCELLANEOUS

28. Appeal

(1) Any person who is aggrieved by –

- (a) a decision under this Act;
- (b) the service of a notice by the Director or any order,

may, not later than 30 days from the day of communication to him of such decision, appeal to the Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal.

(2) The Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal may, on an appeal under subsection (1), make such order as it thinks fit.

29. Jurisdiction

Notwithstanding –

- (a) section 114 of the Courts Act;
- (b) section 72 of the District and Intermediate Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act,

a District Magistrate shall have the power to hear, try and determine any offence under this Act and may impose such penalty as may be provided under this Act.

30. Regulations

(1) The Minister may make such regulations as he thinks fit for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Any regulations made under subsection (1) may provide for –

- (a) the amendment of the Schedules;
- (b) the issue of permits under this Act;

- (c) the levying of fees;
- (d) the categorisation of wetlands under sections 12(2), (3), (4) and (5); and
- (e) such other matter the Minister thinks fit for the purpose of this Act.

31. Consequential amendments

(1) The Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Act is amended –

- (a) in section 2, in the definition of “relevant Act”, by inserting, after paragraph (e), the following new paragraph, the word “or” at the end of paragraph (e) being deleted –

(ea) the Wetlands Act 2026; or

- (b) in section 4, in subsection (1), in paragraph (a), by adding the following new subparagraph, the word “and” at the end of subparagraph (iii) being deleted –

(v) under section 28 of the Wetlands Act 2026; and

(2) The Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act is amended, in section 10, by adding the following new paragraph, the full stop at the end of paragraph (d) being deleted and replaced by the words “; and” and the word “and” at the end of paragraph (c) being deleted –

- (e) discharge such functions and exercise such powers as may be necessary under the Wetlands Act 2026 and for that purpose shall, notwithstanding this Act, report to the National Wetlands Committee under the Wetlands Act.

32. Commencement

(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation.

(2) Different dates may be fixed for the coming into operation of different sections of this Act.

FIRST SCHEDULE

[Section 11(2)]

LIST OF RAMSAR SITES

1. Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary
 2. Pointe D'Esny
 3. Blue Bay Marine Park
-

SECOND SCHEDULE

[Section 21]

STOP ORDER

[Under section 21(1) of the Wetlands Act 2026]

Ref no.

TAKE NOTICE that you, Mr/Mrs
(name of offender), holder of National Identity Card number,
and residing at (address), are, in
contravention of section of the Wetlands Act 2026, conducting out the
following activity at
(address where activity is being conducted) without a valid permit –

.....

NOW, THEREFORE, you are hereby required to forthwith stop all-activities in
accordance with the Wetlands Act 2026.

WARNING YOU THAT if you fail to comply with the requirements of this notice,
you shall commit an offence and shall –

- (a) on a first conviction, be liable to a fine which shall not be less than
rupees and not more than rupees and to imprisonment for a term not
exceeding years;
- (b) on a second or subsequent conviction, be liable to a fine which shall not be
less than rupees and not more than rupees and to imprisonment
for a term not less than years and not exceeding years.

.....
Name of authorised officer

.....
Signature of authorised officer

.....
Date

.....
Office stamp

Copy to –

The supervising officer, Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy
and Fisheries
