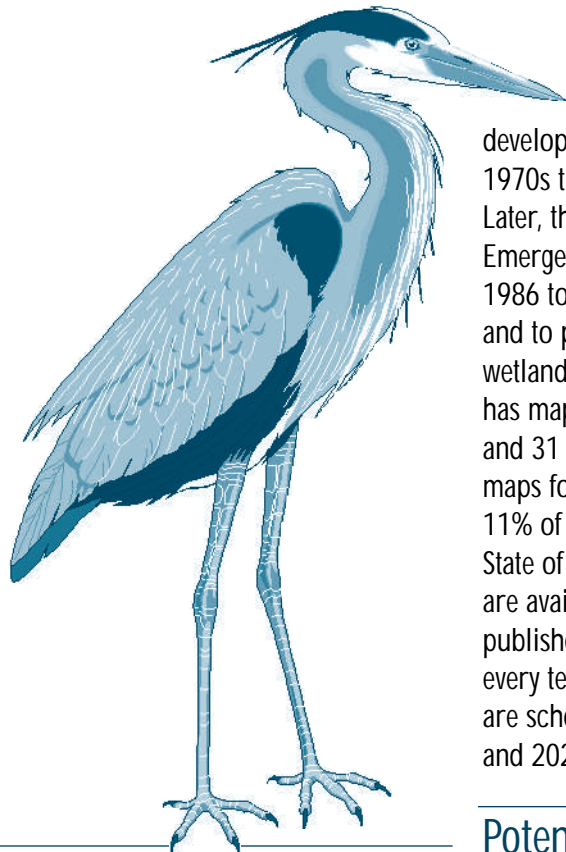


# National Wetlands Inventory Maps



developed the NWI system in the late 1970s to use for wildlife inventories. Later, the USFWS was directed by the Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986 to continue mapping U.S. wetlands and to produce a computerized (digital) wetlands database. As of 1998, the NWI has mapped 89% of the lower 48 states and 31 % of Alaska, and has digitized maps for 39% of the lower 48 states and 11% of Alaska. All NWI maps for the State of Indiana have been digitized and are available to the public. The USFWS publishes 'status and trends' reports every ten years; future national updates are scheduled for the years 2000, 2010, and 2020.

## Did You Know ... ?

Do you deal with wetlands? Do you need to know the location, size, type, and other information about wetlands in a particular area? If so, National Wetlands Inventory maps may be able to help.

## Background

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) system is a system of mapping wetlands in the U.S. NWI maps are 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps that have additional information on water bodies and wetlands. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

determining the location of transportation corridors, schools, and other buildings.

**Private Sector Planning**---determining the location and nature of wetlands to help develop alternative plans in order to meet regulatory requirements; preventing problems from developing; providing facts that allow sound business decisions to be made quickly, accurately, and efficiently.

**Resource Managers**---management and acquisition of wildlife habitat, especially waterfowl; fisheries restoration; floodplain planning; development and implementation of endangered species recovery plans.

**Regulatory Agencies**---preliminary wetland identification and determining wetland types.

## Only a Preliminary Tool

The NWI maps are a preliminary tool for determining jurisdictional wetlands for regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (the "Corps' permit" program). The maps alone are not sufficient for determining if a wetland is present for this purpose. A wetland delineation must be done on-site, by a trained investigator examining soils, water indicators, and plants using the method described in the 1987 Delineation Manual. For more details, consult the

Corps ([www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg](http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg)). For wetlands in agricultural settings, consult your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for assistance.

## How is the NWI System Different from the Army Corps of Engineers System?

The NWI system is described in detail in the document entitled "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States" by Lewis M. Cowardin et al., published by the USFWS in 1979. The NWI system, which was originally developed for wildlife inventory purposes, predated the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual, which is used for jurisdictional and regulatory purposes. The NWI system focuses on water indicators and landscape location, and does not require that wetlands possess all 3 criteria specified in the Corps' manual and regulatory program (water indicators, hydric soil, and wetland vegetation).

## Proper Use of NWI Maps

The User's Guide to National Wetland Inventory Maps, published by the USFWS in June 1993 states, "When using NWI maps, it is important to remember that the NWI is inventorying all wetlands without emphasis on any particular type or location, nor is it restricted to wetlands regulated by Federal, State or local regulatory agencies." The User's Guide also points out that all map products contain special notes to the effect that:

- the aerial photography analysis has an inherent margin of error.
- the system is not intended to coincide with jurisdictions of wetland regulatory agencies.

## Important Precautions

- Know the dates of the NWI maps you use, remembering that changes in land use and wetlands could have occurred since that time.
- There are always limitations inherent in map scale.
- Because NWI maps have been prepared from aerial photographs, they can be less accurate for locating wetlands in forested areas.

## For More Information

To find out more about the National Wetlands Inventory, visit the NWI website at [www.nwi.fws.gov](http://www.nwi.fws.gov), or contact the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at:

IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Room W273 I.G.C.S.  
402 West Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317 232-4080

## How to Obtain NWI Maps

If you can locate the area of interest on a U.S.G.S. topographic map first, it will be much easier to find the site on an NWI map. For information and product availability, or to order hard copy maps or digital data for delivery on magnetic tape, call 1-800-USA-MAPS. Or you can contact Indiana's state distribution center at:

Indiana DNR  
Map Sales Division

402 W. Washington St., W160  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2742  
317-232-4180

If you have access to the Internet, you can download data from the NWI website ([www.nwi.fws.gov](http://www.nwi.fws.gov)).



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