

## Hydrological naturalness

### Water level fluctuations

Evidence of water level fluctuations can often be seen when the water level retreats leaving an obvious shoreline. The exposed shoreline may consist of sand, stones, peat or silt and it may be bare (1a) or vegetated (1b). Give-away clues are the presence of aquatic plants in a strandline above the current water level or aquatic plants struggling to grow once the water level has dropped (1c). Whether these fluctuations are natural or artificial can be informed by local knowledge and observations of how the species cope. Aquatic plants being left stranded above the water line as in 1c indicate a rapid, unusual drawdown event, which is usually artificial.



## Hydrological structures

The presence of water level control structures illustrate that the hydrological regime is not natural. As well as altering lake hydrology they can be impassable to fish species, although this will vary depending on the nature and size of the structure. The weir in 2b is sufficiently small to allow at least a number of individuals of some species to pass. 2d shows a weir with a fish pass, the covered structure to the left of the weir, which will make the weir passable to a sub-set of species. 2e illustrates that structures do not have to be large to prevent fish passage.

