

Seagrass

Cover within sampling sites

South Australia's

Environmental trend and condition report card 2018



STATEWIDE



Trend
Getting better



Condition
Fair



Reliability
Excellent

Trend

The statewide trend for seagrass cover within sampling sites is getting better.

In this assessment 'seagrass' refers to the cover of two seagrass species within sites measured periodically by the Environment Protection Authority.

The statewide trend in seagrass cover within sampling sites was getting better between 2009 and 2016. Regional trends were getting better in one natural resources management region (Eyre Peninsula [EP]), were stable in three regions (Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges [AMLR], Kangaroo Island [KI], and Northern and Yorke [NY]) and were unknown in one region (South East [SE]) (top figure).

Loss of seagrass on populated coasts before 2007 was mainly caused by decreased water quality.

Large-scale seagrass loss due to low tides and extreme temperatures has also been recorded on western Yorke Peninsula since 1987.

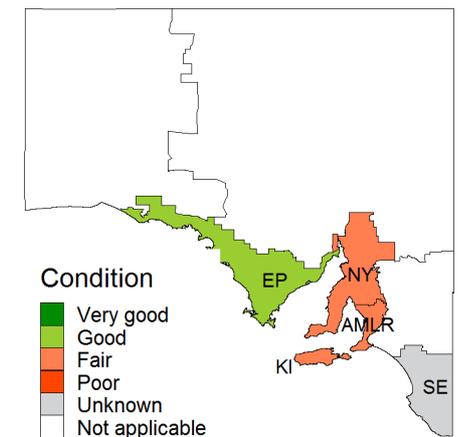
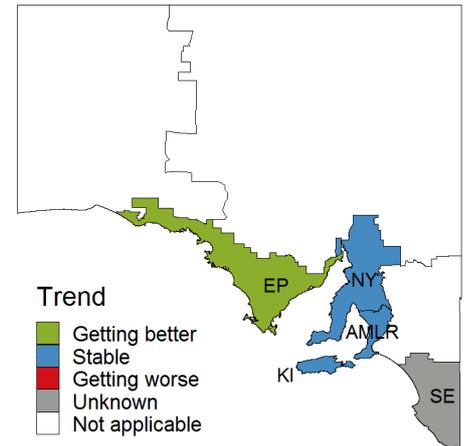
Condition

The statewide condition of seagrass cover within sampling sites is fair.

Across South Australia, seagrass cover within sampling sites is estimated at 45%. At the regional level, estimates are 38% in AMLR (fair), 51% in EP (good), 30% in KI (fair) and 44% in NY (fair) (bottom figure).

The past cover of seagrass in many natural resources management regions is largely unknown.

Seagrass cover across South Australia's coast is improving after historical losses



Why is seagrass important?

Seagrass traps sediment, reduces wave energy and prevents coastal erosion, thereby protecting coastal infrastructure and saving millions of dollars in coastal protection strategies. Seagrass also cycles nutrients, stores carbon, and provides food and shelter for marine animals.

What are the pressures?

Seagrass is primarily threatened by poor water quality, including increased nutrients, sediment loads and turbidity.

Poor water quality is caused by stormwater, treated sewage, and agricultural run-off, as well as industrial discharges and aquaculture.

Disturbance by trawling, boat moorings and dredging can also affect seagrass.

What is being done?

Marine parks and native vegetation legislation protect seagrass from inappropriate development, clearing and damage.

Implementation of the Adelaide Water Quality Improvement Plan is improving water quality for seagrass by reducing nutrient and sediment inputs to Adelaide coastal waters.

For further information see: [technical information](#)



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