

2014 Regional Snapshot

Are the extent and condition of our seagrass improving?

The marine environment provides valuable resources for regional economies, supporting tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, shipping and mining. Most South Australians live near the coast and many coastal and marine systems are under pressure from human impacts.

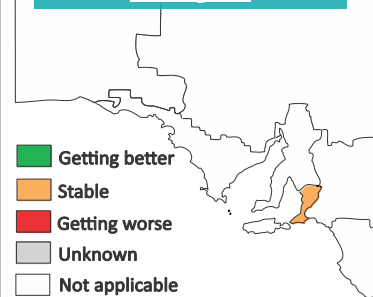
Seagrass traps sediment, reduces wave energy and prevents coastal erosion, thereby protecting coastal infrastructure and saving millions of dollars in coastal protection strategies. It also cycles nutrients, stores carbon and provides food and shelter for numerous marine animals.

Seagrass in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region is threatened by declining water quality due to increases in nutrients, pollutants, sediment loads and turbidity. These are caused by freshwater inputs from stormwater, treated sewage, seepage and agricultural runoff as well as industrial discharges. Disturbance by trawling, boat moorings and dredging are also potential threats.

The health of our seagrass relies on the management of water quality within catchments, and management of activities that cause physical disturbance.



Trend in the condition of seagrass



State target

Improve condition of coastal and marine ecosystems

Trend in condition (2010-11)

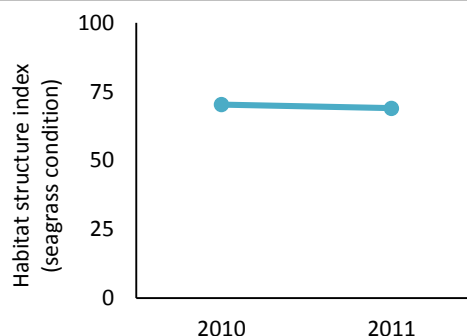
Stable

The condition of seagrass remained stable in the areas that were studied

The condition of seagrass in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges was stable between 2010-11 (graph on right) in the areas that were studied.

Long-term losses of seagrass have been confirmed on populated coasts where the impacts of decreased water quality are most intense. Off the Adelaide metropolitan coast, urban-based nutrients entering coastal waters caused over 5000 hectares of seagrass to be lost between 1949 and 2007. Recent mapping studies off Adelaide suggest seagrass extent may have stabilised since 2007.

This trend in seagrass loss matches those recorded worldwide, with seagrass now covering about two thirds of its former area globally.



Where we are at (2011)

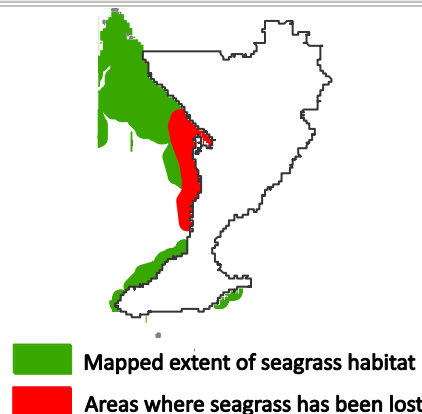
Good

Seagrass has been lost from much of our metropolitan coast, but may have now stabilised. Remaining seagrass in the NRM region is considered in good condition.

Seagrass loss has been recorded in many areas along metropolitan coasts where impacts from decreased water quality have been most intense. In the locations studied in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region, an estimated 40 per cent of seagrass has been lost since 1949.

The Environment Protection Authority is monitoring the condition of existing seagrass in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM region. Seagrass was in good condition in 2011 with a score of 69 out of 100 (where 100 represents excellent habitat condition). These results were consistent with the 2010 assessment.

An interagency review of seagrass research is underway and government agencies are working with the community to improve the extent and condition of seagrass.



Reliability of information



Very good

Further information: [Technical information for this report](#), [Aquatic ecosystem condition reports](#)