

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.

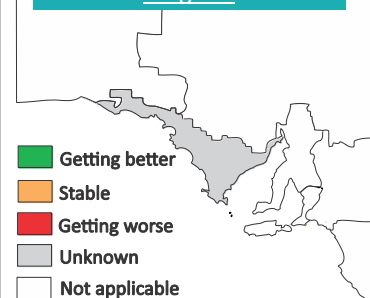
Seagrass traps sediment, reduces wave energy and prevents coastal erosion, thereby protecting coastal infrastructure and saving millions of dollars in coastal protection strategies. It also cycles nutrients, stores carbon and provides food and shelter for numerous marine animals.

Seagrass on populated coasts of the Eyre Peninsula 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 and aquaculture. 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.



Trends in the condition of seagrass



State target

Improve condition of coastal and marine ecosystems

Trend in condition

Unknown

The condition of seagrass in the Eyre Peninsula NRM region is not known

Trend in the condition of seagrass in the Eyre Peninsula NRM region is not known.

Long-term losses of seagrass have been confirmed on populated coasts where the impacts of decreased water quality are most intense. In the locations studied in the Eyre Peninsula NRM region, an estimated 30 per cent of seagrass was lost between 1997 and 2009. In Boston Bay, near Port Lincoln, nearly 1000 hectares has been lost since 1978.

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 (2010)

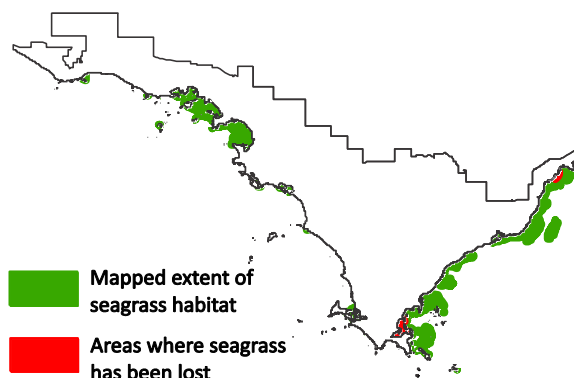
Good

Seagrass loss has occurred in populated areas, but across the NRM region the extent and the condition of seagrass are not known

Seagrass loss has been recorded in Boston Bay and off Whyalla (map on right). The extent of seagrass loss in other areas of the Eyre Peninsula NRM region is largely unknown.

The Environment Protection Authority is monitoring the condition of seagrass in the Eyre Peninsula NRM region. Seagrass was in good condition in 2010 with a score of 67 out of 100 (where 100 represents excellent habitat condition).

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



Good

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