2013 State Report Card

How are diseases affecting our native plants and animals?

Diseases that affect our native plants and animals can have devastating impacts, and some of these diseases can even affect our own health. Diseases can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa or parasites.

Some diseases have been listed nationally as *Key Threatening Processes* because they may have contributed to the extinction of some native plants and animals and are a threat to the survival of others. The impact of some diseases can be made worse by habitat fragmentation, pollution, weeds, competition with pest species, droughts and climate change.

Diseases can be introduced on contaminated materials (e.g. footwear, vehicles, plants, soil) and the movement of infected animals or water. To protect our native plants and animals, disease outbreaks must be prevented and established diseases must be contained.

Regional trends in the impacts of native plant and animal diseases

State target:

Limit the establishment of pests and diseases and reduce the impacts of existing pests

Trend	Unknown	There is not enough information to determine trends for most diseases

Tracking diseases that affect our native plants and animals relies mainly on reports of suspicious outbreaks of illnesses or deaths or plant dieback. In most cases, this information is not enough for us to determine whether diseases are becoming more prevalent or not (see summary on right).

However, we do know that *Phytophthora* — a disease that causes dieback of our native plants in higher rainfall areas with neutral or acidic soil — is becoming more widespread.

Trends in diseases

↑ *Phytophthora*

? Chytridiomycosis in amphibians, sarcoptic mange and alkaloid toxicity in wombats (pictured above), psittacine beak and feather disease in parrots, kangaroo blindness, chlamydia in koalas.

Where we are at (2013)	Unknown	There is not enough information available to assess the impact of diseases

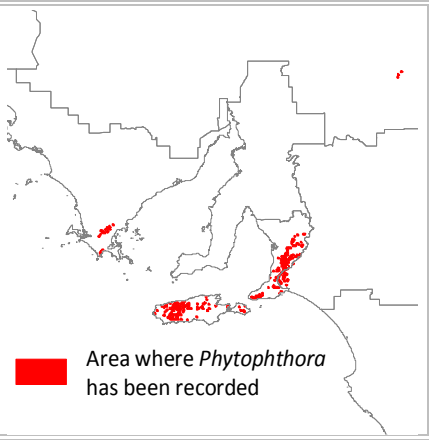
Phytophthora has been recorded in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and SA Arid Lands natural resource management regions (see map on right).

Australian bat lyssavirus (2012) and Hendra virus (2013) were recently recorded for the first time in our native bat populations. This is not a surprising result, but a reminder for the public to avoid contact with bats.

Chlamydia was officially recorded for the first time in our koala population in 2012.

The extent of Chytridiomycosis in South Australia is largely unknown, but studies in 1998 and 2013 confirmed its presence in our native frogs.

The extent of psittacine beak and feather disease is also largely unknown, but it has been recorded in our cockatoos and lorikeets.



Reliability of information	★☆☆☆☆	Poor

Further information:

Technical information for this report card

Australia Wildlife Health Network

Government of South Australia