

Proportion of fish stocks sustainable



Biodiversity | Coastal and marine

South Australia's environmental trend and condition report cards 2023



Trend
Stable



Condition
Good



Reliability
Very good

STATE

Trend

The proportion of fish stocks in South Australia classified as sustainable has remained stable at more than 75% since 2012.

This assessment compares the status of South Australian fish stocks between 2012 and 2022. In this period, at least 75% of fish stocks were classified as sustainable each year. In 2022, this proportion was 79% (38 stocks) (bottom figure).

Six South Australian stocks transitioned to a worse category between 2012 and 2022 (Central Zone blacklip abalone, Central Zone greenlip abalone, Gulf St Vincent and Spencer Gulf/West Coast snapper, northern Gulf St Vincent southern garfish, and West Coast western king prawn).

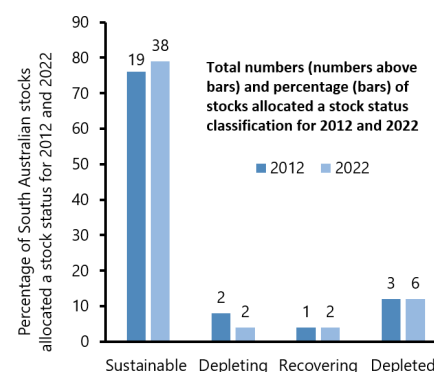
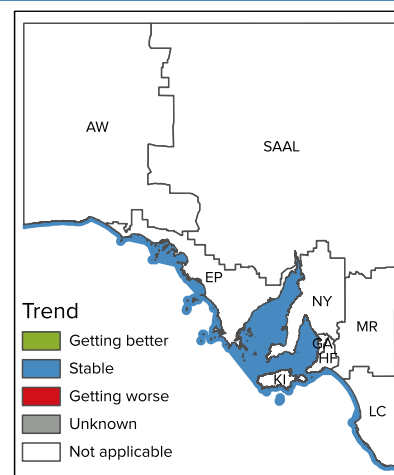
One stock transitioned to a better category between 2012 and 2022, with northern Spencer Gulf garfish moving from depleting to recovering.

Condition

The condition of fish stocks in 2022 is good.

The latest stock assessments indicate that 38 out of 48 fishery stocks are currently sustainable. Six (12%) stocks are classified as depleted (black bream and greenback flounder in the Lakes and Coorong Fishery, northern Gulf St Vincent garfish, Port River vongole (mud cockle), and Gulf St Vincent and Spencer Gulf/West Coast snapper), 2 (4%) as depleting (Central Zone greenlip abalone and West Coast western king prawn), and 2 (4%) as recovering (northern Spencer Gulf garfish and Central Zone blacklip abalone). Depleting stocks are not necessarily overfished, but rather this status prompts management consideration to prevent recruitment being impaired.

In South Australia, 79% of fishery stocks are classified as sustainable, and 12% are depleted.



Why are sustainable fish stocks important?

Maintaining healthy fisheries is an important part of maintaining healthy marine ecosystems and supporting local industries and communities.

South Australia's fisheries support regional economies, tourism, and commercial, recreational and Aboriginal traditional fishers. Approximately 1 in 4 South Australians fish recreationally each year. In 2021–22, commercial fishers caught 46,000 tonnes of seafood valued at \$444.6 million.

What are the pressures?

Environmental conditions, fishing pressure and natural variation in breeding success and subsequent recruitment to fishable stocks all affect the status of fish stocks. Improvements in technology can increase the catch potential for recreational and commercial fishers.

Other pressures are associated with population growth, climate change, coastal development and pollution. These issues can impact habitats like mangroves and seagrass, which support fish stocks.

What is being done?

South Australian fisheries are managed under the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*. There are a number of management controls under the Act that ensure sustainable fishing activities.

Depleted and depleting fish stocks are being managed to promote recovery. This is done through gear restrictions, size limit increases and/or bag limit reductions for recreational fishers or reductions in allowable catch for commercial fishers. Where necessary, fisheries can also be temporarily closed, prohibiting all take of specific species or prohibiting take in specific areas.

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



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