2014 Regional Snapshot

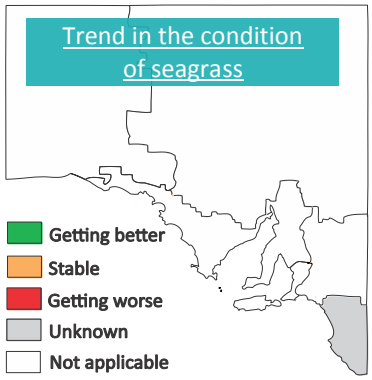
Are the extent and condition of our seagrass improving?

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 South East 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. Disturbance by 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.



State target

Improve condition of coastal and marine ecosystems

Trend in condition	Unknown	The condition of seagrass in the South East NRM region is not known

Trends in the condition of seagrass in the South East NRM region are 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 South East NRM region, an estimated 80 per cent of seagrass was lost between 1951 and 2008. Impacts are most apparent in Rivoli Bay, near Beachport, where over 20 hectares of seagrass has been lost since 1951 (map on right).

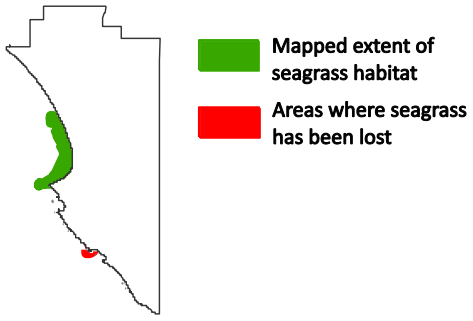
This trend in seagrass loss matches those recorded worldwide, with seagrass now covering about two thirds of its former area globally.

Where we are at (2013)	Unknown	Seagrass loss has occurred across the region, but the extent and the condition of seagrass are not known

The loss of seagrass in the NRM region has been driven by freshwater inputs from the South East drainage network. These areas have not been mapped, and so they are not displayed in the map on the right.

The condition of seagrass in the South East NRM region is not known.

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	★☆☆☆☆	Poor

Further information: Technical information for this report, Aquatic ecosystem condition reports

This report is a work in progress. As resource monitoring improves, so too will our ability to describe trends in condition.

Government of South Australia