

Inland waters: invasive fish



Established invasive fish abundance and distribution

South Australia's

Environmental trend and condition report card 2018

STATEWIDE



Trend
Getting worse



Condition
Poor



Reliability
Fair

Trend

The abundance and distribution of established invasive fish in South Australia is getting worse.

This assessment is of the abundance and distribution of established invasive fish in the state's inland waters (lakes, rivers and streams) since 2013.

Trends are getting worse in four natural resources management (NRM) regions (South Australian Murray–Darling Basin [SAMDB], Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges [AMLR], Kangaroo Island [KI] and South East [SE]) (top figure). Common carp numbers have increased significantly in the Murray–Darling Basin catchments, oriental weatherloach (bottom figure) has spread along the full extent of the River Murray in South Australia, and eastern gambusia has increased in many regions.

In the South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL) NRM Region, sleepy cod is spreading through the Cooper Creek catchment after first being detected in 2009.

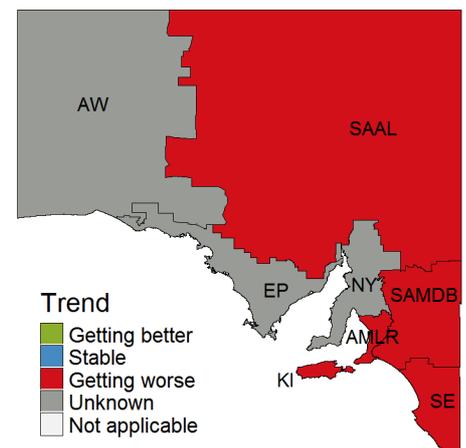
Trends are unknown in the Eyre Peninsula (EP), Northern and Yorke (NY), and Alinytjara and Wilurara (AW) NRM regions because of insufficient information.

Condition

The current condition of established invasive fish abundance and distribution is poor because their range is large and continues to expand.

Invasive fish are found in many of South Australia's waterways. New range expansions of a number of populations have been recorded.

Invasive fish have increased in abundance and distribution across South Australia since 2013



Oriental weatherloach – First detected in 2011 and now established along the full extent of the River Murray in South Australia (approximately 100-mm long).

Why are inland waters invasive fish a problem?

Invasive fish have environmental, social and economic impacts on our waterways. They can alter the structure and function of aquatic ecosystems, compete with native species, reduce water quality, spread disease, and affect recreation and tourism. For example, common carp is estimated to cost the recreational fisheries sector \$44 million annually in the Murray–Darling Basin.

What are the pressures?

Invasive fish can disperse beyond their natural range and become established naturally or by human activity, such as translocation of fishing species. With increasing trade, transport and development, the risk of new incursions is high.

Invasive fish distribution and abundance can change in response to climate, and changes in water flows and availability.

Some invasive species are not easily seen and may be hard to identify, meaning that they are more likely to establish and spread without detection.

What is being done?

The primary focus of invasive species management is community education to prevent human-assisted dispersal.

Once an invasive fish is established in a natural waterway, it is difficult to eradicate.

At a local scale, control options may include removal, smothering and chemical treatment.

Invasive aquatic species are managed through environment and fisheries legislation, and biosecurity policies.

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



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