Land: invasive species

Abundance and distribution of established invasive species

South Australia's
Environmental trend and condition report card 2018

STATEWIDE

Trend
Getting worse

Condition
Poor

Reliability
Poor

Trend

Overall, the trend in the abundance and distribution of established invasive plants and animals is getting worse.

This report card assesses the abundance and distribution, between 2013 and 2017, of 23 nationally important invasive plants and animals that are established in SA.

Trends are getting worse in the Northern and Yorke (NY), Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges (AMLR), and South East (SE) natural resources management (NRM) regions (top figure). In these regions, the abundance and distribution of feral goats, pigs and deer; wild dogs; mice; and asparagus weeds have increased (bottom figure).

In the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW), South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL), South Australian Murray–Darling Basin (SAMDB), Eyre Peninsula (EP) and Kangaroo Island (KI) NRM regions, no changes were recorded in the distribution and abundance of foxes and athel pine.

Feral rabbits have decreased in the AW, EP and SAMDB NRM regions, and gorse (a major agricultural weed) has decreased across the EP, KI, NY and SE NRM regions.

Condition

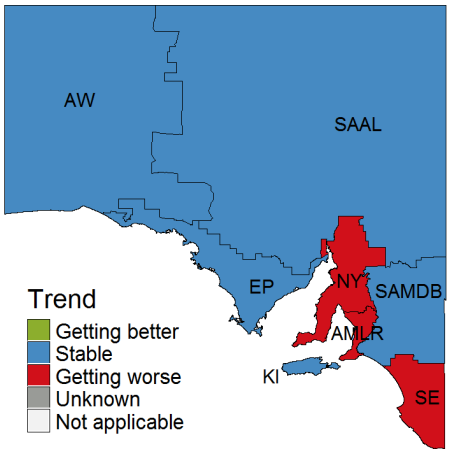
Condition is poor because many established invasive species continue to increase in abundance and distribution across the state.

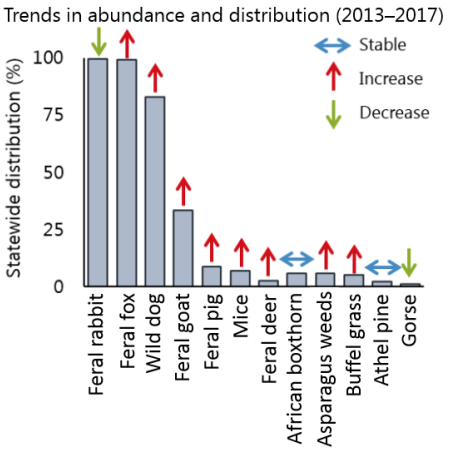
Condition is poor due to the ongoing spread of established invasive species.

Although the abundance and distribution of invasive species is generally getting worse, education, community awareness and management programs have led to some reduction in feral rabbits and gorse.

Ongoing efforts are needed to prevent further increases in the abundance, distribution and impact of other invasive species.

The trend in the abundance and distribution of established invasive species is getting worse in South Australia





Why are land invasive species a problem?

Invasive species kill and compete with crops, pasture, livestock and native flora and fauna; carry and spread diseases; reduce the value of our natural and built areas, including areas of cultural significance; and impact the structure and function of ecosystems and native biodiversity. Some weeds also increase the intensity and heat of bushfires.

Each year, weeds cost the Australian economy $4 billion, and pest animals cost $720 million in control measures and lost production.

What are the pressures?

Pest animals and weeds can disperse beyond their natural range and become established naturally or by human activity, either deliberate or accidental. With increasing trade, transport and development, the risk of new incursions is high.

Invasive species distribution and abundance can change in response to climate, fire, land clearance, and land management and farming practices.

What is being done?

Regional programs seek to manage established invasive pest animals and weeds, and prevent new ones from establishing.

Control methods are tailored for each species in line with current threats and opportunities, and may include community education, support for on-ground works, coordinated shooting or removal of pest animals, and chemical treatment of weeds.

For further information see: technical information