

Subtidal reefs

Reef condition

SA trend and condition report card 2020



STATEWIDE



Trend
Unknown



Condition
Good



Reliability
Fair

Trend

Trends in the condition of subtidal reefs in most landscape regions are unknown.

Assessments of subtidal reefs have mainly been conducted in the waters off the Green Adelaide (GA) and Hills and Fleurieu (HF) regions. Surveys between 2005 and 2013 in these regions indicated some improvement in condition.

Reefs in the Northern and Yorke (NY) region were assessed in 2005 and 2006, but have not been assessed since.

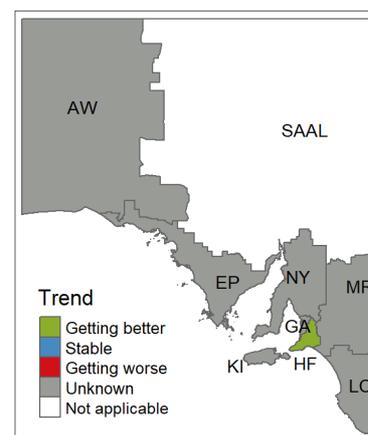
The trend and condition of reefs in the Alinytjara Wilurara (AW), Eyre Peninsula (EP), Kangaroo Island (KI), Murraylands and Riverland (MR), and Limestone Coast (LC) regions are not known (top figure).

Condition

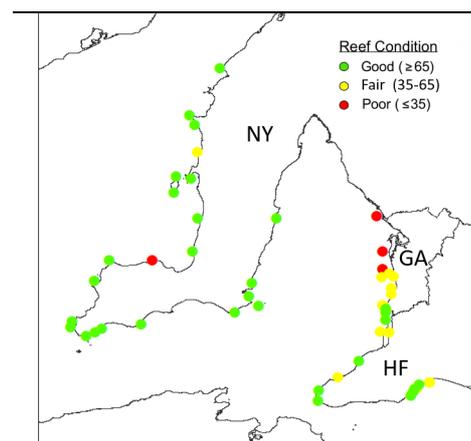
Overall, subtidal reefs are in good condition.

Reef assessments indicate that there is a north-south gradient of decreasing condition as a result of urban development and increased pollution levels near metropolitan areas. Reefs in GA are mostly in poor to fair condition, while reefs in HF range from fair to good (bottom figure).

Subtidal reefs in NY were primarily in good condition when assessed in 2006, but have not been assessed since.



The statewide condition of subtidal reefs is good, but is poorer near metropolitan waters.



Location and condition scores for reefs in Northern and Yorke (2005-2006), Green Adelaide (2005-2010) and Hills and Fleurieu (2005-2013) regions.

Why are subtidal reefs important?

Reefs provide diverse habitats that support biodiversity and productive food webs. Maintaining reef condition is important because they support regional economies through tourism, and commercial and recreational fishing. Reefs are also culturally important to Aboriginal peoples.

What are the pressures?

Reefs are threatened by declining water quality due to nutrient inputs and pollutants, as well as sediment loads and turbidity from a range of sources including stormwater, treated sewage, seepage and agricultural run-off, industrial discharges and aquaculture. Physical disturbance, impacts of dredging, introduced marine pests, anchor damage, illegal harvesting and overfishing are also threats.

What is being done?

Improving reef condition requires management of land-based discharges, improvements to water quality, and management of marine pests, physical disturbance and overfishing.

Marine parks, fisheries management and environmental protection legislation such as the Adelaide Coastal Water Quality Improvement Plan provide protection for South Australian reefs.

Work is currently being undertaken to define reef condition and improve methods to assess regional trends.

For further information, see [Technical information](#)



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