

Aquatic ecosystem condition



EPA condition assessments

SA trend and condition report card 2020

STATEWIDE



Trend
Unknown



Condition
Fair



Reliability
Fair

Trend

The overall trend in aquatic ecosystem condition in South Australia is unknown.

Trend was assessed at 41 sites across South Australia. These sites are in four regions: Green Adelaide (GA; 6 sites), Hills and Fleurieu (HF; 12 sites), Limestone Coast (LC; 17 sites), and Northern and Yorke (NY; 6 sites) (top figure).

The trends in each of these four regions were classed as stable (top figure). The sites for which trend was assessed generally align with other monitoring (e.g. flow monitoring) programs or are considered to be in better condition.

This assessment uses data from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) ([available here](#)). An assessment of trend was only possible where the same site had been monitored three or more times.

Condition

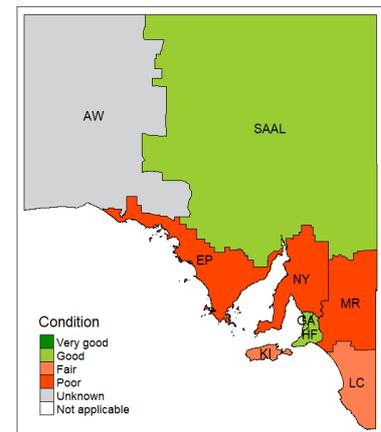
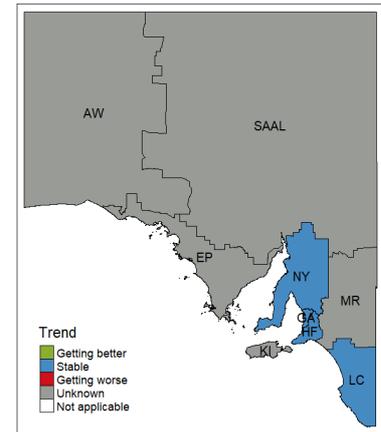
Overall, aquatic ecosystems of South Australia are in fair condition.

Monitoring of South Australia's aquatic ecosystems is generally at sites in better condition. Smaller watercourses are not assessed. The condition presented in the bottom figure reflects the bias of monitoring sites in better condition. The use of randomly selected sites would likely result in a lower condition score. The most recent condition data were sourced from the EPA ([available here](#)).

These data were analysed to enable categorisation consistent with South Australia's trend and condition report cards.

Although the overall condition is classed as fair, lower-rainfall areas are generally in poor condition (except South Australian Arid Lands or SAAL).

Aquatic ecosystems assessed across South Australia are generally in fair condition.



Why is aquatic ecosystem condition important?

Inland aquatic ecosystems are important for cultural, environmental, social and economic reasons, including supporting ecological food webs, improving water quality, absorbing pollutants, and providing habitat for animals and plants. Water from these systems also supports agriculture and industry.

Aquatic ecosystems help people connect with nature, and provide mental and physical health benefits.

What are the pressures?

Aquatic ecosystems are adversely affected by a range of factors, including land development, land clearance and water taken for productive use.

The result of these impacts is decreased water quality, decreased flow, loss of habitat structure and generally degraded environments, all of which are compounded during dry periods such as the Millennium Drought and the projected conditions under climate change.

Exotic fish species are also a significant threat to many aquatic ecosystems.

What is being done?

Water quantity is managed through water allocation plans and the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. Water quality is addressed through managing point source and diffuse pollution, and activities such as fencing out livestock and revegetation projects. Tracking and reporting on aquatic ecosystems is done by the EPA and landscape regions.

Native vegetation legislation protects riverine and wetland habitat from further clearance. Programs are in place to manage weeds and pest animals.

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



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