

Coastal saltmarsh

Percentage cover

SA trend and condition report card 2020



STATEWIDE



Trend

The statewide trend in percentage cover of coastal saltmarsh is stable.

This assessment uses data on coastal saltmarsh (e.g. salt-tolerant vegetation in tidally influenced areas) from the South Australian Land Cover 1987–2015 dataset.

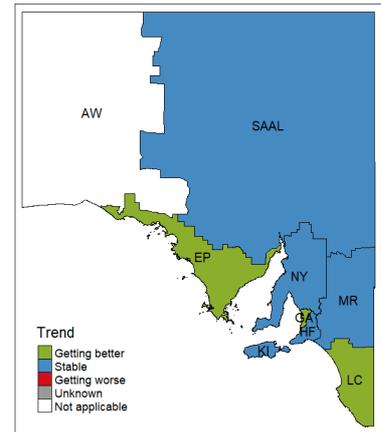
Across landscape regions, the trend in percentage cover of coastal saltmarsh is getting better in three regions (Eyre Peninsula [EP], Limestone Coast [LC] and Green Adelaide [GA]) and is stable in five regions (Hills and Fleurieu [HF], Kangaroo Island [KI], Northern and Yorke [NY], South Australian Arid Lands [SAAL] and Murraylands and Riverland [MR]). Coastal saltmarsh does not grow in Alinytjara Wilurara (AW) (top figure).

Loss of coastal saltmarsh cover before 1990 was mainly due to coastal developments.

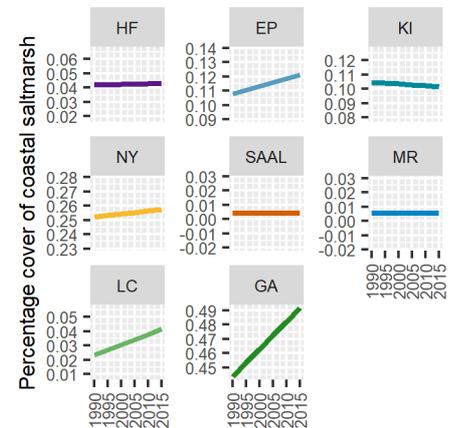
Condition

The condition of coastal saltmarsh percentage cover is unknown because there are no agreed statewide benchmarks.

Across South Australia, the extent of coastal saltmarsh in 2015 was estimated to be 20,790 hectares. At the regional level, estimates were 200 hectares in HF (0.043% of the region), 6070 hectares in EP (0.12% of the region), 450 hectares on KI (0.1% of the region), 9750 hectares in NY (0.26% of the region), 2320 hectares in SAAL (0.0044% of the region), 260 hectares in MR (0.0054% of the region), 1110 hectares in LC (0.041% of the region) and 630 hectares in GA (0.49% of the region) (bottom figure).



The area of coastal saltmarsh is generally stable but has increased in three regions since 1990.



Why is coastal saltmarsh important?

Saltmarshes trap sediments and prevent coastal erosion. They also help to maintain coastal water quality, cycle nutrients, store carbon, and provide food and habitat for coastal and marine animals in South Australia, such as the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot and the vulnerable slender-billed thornbill.

What are the pressures?

Coastal saltmarsh is under pressure from clearance and fragmentation, coastal development, construction of tidal barriers and drains, off-road vehicles, decreased water quality, pollution, grazing, invasive species and climate change. An emerging pressure on coastal saltmarsh is sea level rise, particularly where barriers prevent movement of vegetation to higher ground.

What is being done?

State and national legislation provides protection for coastal saltmarsh from development and clearing.

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



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