

# CLLMM: Lower Lakes vegetation



## Vegetation target success

SA trend and condition report card 2020

STATEWIDE



Trend  
**Getting better**



Condition  
**Fair**



Reliability  
**Very good**

### Trend

**Vegetation condition in the Lower Lakes is getting better; however, some areas are showing decline.**

The trend in vegetation has been determined using a whole-of-icon site score representing condition. This combines individual scores from Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert, Goolwa Channel, permanent wetlands and temporary wetlands.

Whole-of-icon site scores were low during the peak of the Millennium Drought before improving after the return of freshwater flows in 2010. Scores have generally been stable since 2012, with improvements in 2015 and 2018 (top figure).

The largest improvements in condition have been recorded in Lakes Alexandrina and Albert. Vegetation condition has varied in the permanent and temporary wetlands.

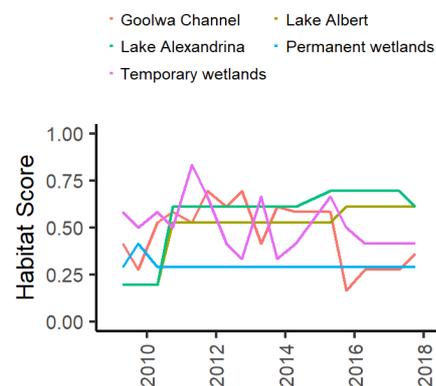
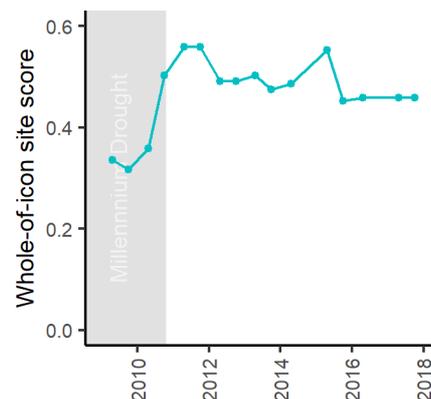
Freshwater inflows have contributed to this improvement by maintaining adequate lake levels and salinity conditions.

### Condition

**Overall, the vegetation in the Lower Lakes of the River Murray is in fair condition.**

Although the overall condition of aquatic and littoral vegetation in the Lower Lakes is considered fair, condition varies between habitats (bottom figure). Condition in Lakes Albert and Alexandrina is good, while Goolwa Channel and the permanent and temporary wetlands are rated as poor to fair.

**Vegetation condition in the Lower Lakes is generally getting better, with some areas of decline.**



### Why is Lower Lakes vegetation important?

Aquatic and littoral vegetation in the Lower Lakes plays an important ecological role by improving water quality, minimising shoreline erosion and providing important habitat for invertebrates, birds, frogs and fish.

### What are the pressures?

Regulation of the River Murray, combined with river operations to support water supply and irrigation, have affected the management of Lower Lakes water levels and reduced water delivery to the Coorong. These pressures have reduced the inflow of water that supports a diverse aquatic and shoreline vegetation community.

The health of aquatic and littoral vegetation is also affected by changes in water quality (e.g. salinity), which can limit the ability of plants to respond to positive changes in water levels.

### What is being done?

The improvement of Lower Lakes vegetation scores suggests that current hydrological and salinity regimes are supporting aquatic and littoral vegetation recovery, particularly since the unprecedented low water levels during the Millennium Drought. The delivery of water contributes to maintaining lake levels and salinity. Additional work currently being undertaken through the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin program is expected to further improve the condition of vegetation in the Lower Lakes.

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



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