

CLLMM: Coorong waterbirds



Population condition score

SA trend and condition report card 2020

STATEWIDE



Trend
Getting worse



Condition
Poor



Reliability
Very good

Trend

The overall abundance of waterbirds in the Coorong is declining, but with variations between different groups of waterbirds.

Coorong waterbirds are grouped into 'guilds' based on their diet, the way they search for food and their life history.

Recovery of waterbirds in the Coorong since the Millennium Drought has varied between guilds. The abundance of herbivores, omnivores and piscivores has remained stable or improved, while resident and migratory shorebirds have declined (figure).

Shorebirds are highly mobile. The decline in these guilds is a function of both the local condition at the Coorong and the availability of suitable habitat in other locations, both nationally and internationally.

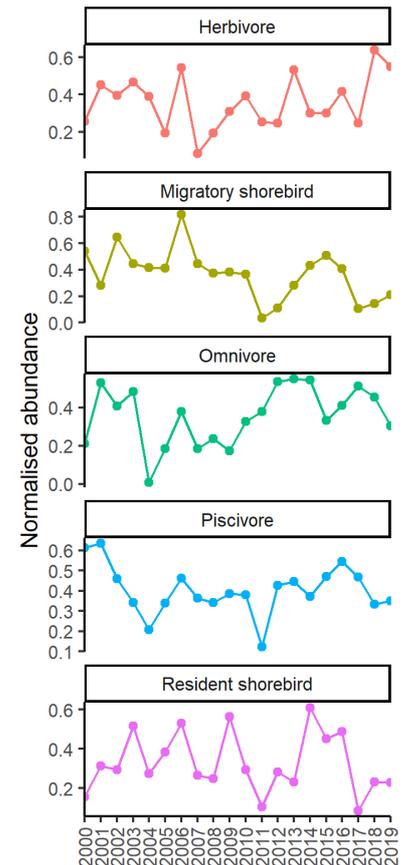
Condition

The condition of the waterbird community in the Coorong is rated as poor.

The condition of waterbirds in the Coorong is determined by the proportion of species in each guild that has met their long-term median abundance target.

The delivery of water has prevented the return of salinity levels experienced during the Millennium Drought. However, water delivery has been insufficient to improve nutrients and water levels. This has limited the recovery of waterbirds in the Coorong, and the habitats and food resources that support them.

The abundance of Coorong waterbirds is getting worse.



Why are Coorong waterbirds important?

The Coorong is recognised as a wetland of international importance. It supports nationally or internationally threatened species, and species listed on international migratory bird agreements.

Waterbirds are sensitive to changes in environmental conditions, as well as the quality and availability of habitat and food resources. Therefore, waterbirds are an important indicator of ecosystem health. Many waterbirds are also culturally and recreationally significant.

What are the pressures?

Water levels and water quality, including salinity and nutrients, affect the availability, quality and accessibility of habitats and food resources in the Coorong. These pressures all influence the abundances of waterbirds in the Coorong.

Factors external to the Coorong also influence the abundance of waterbirds, including the availability of wetlands at national and continental scales and breeding success of waterbirds at these wetlands.

What is being done?

Water delivered to the Coorong has been insufficient to maintain viable waterbird populations.

More work is being undertaken to improve the health of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) including the ongoing implementation of the Basin Plan, and research and works planned under the Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin program.

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



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