

Coastal saltmarsh: percentage cover



Biodiversity | Coastal and marine

South Australia's environmental trend and condition report cards 2023



Trend
Unknown



Condition
Unknown

☆☆☆ Reliability
☆☆☆ Good

STATE

Trend

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

This assessment uses data from the South Australian Land Cover Layers 1987–2020 for 8 South Australian landscape regions with coastal saltmarsh (e.g. salt tolerant vegetation in tidally influenced areas). Due to recent changes in the sensors and accuracy of satellite data it is currently not possible to assign a trend to percentage cover of coastal saltmarsh. Methods to deal with changing satellite technology are evolving and it is likely that future reporting will be able to retrospectively apply trends to percentage cover of coastal saltmarsh for the current reporting period.

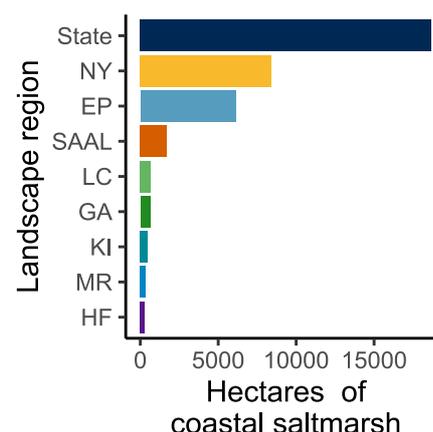
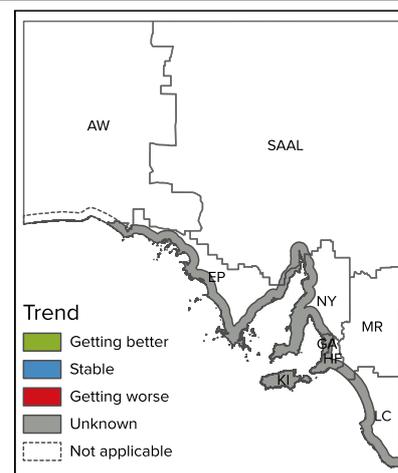
Loss of coastal saltmarsh cover prior to satellite observations was mainly due to coastal developments.

Condition

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

In 2020, the percentage cover of coastal saltmarsh was 0.019% statewide. This is based on an estimated extent of 18,700 hectares (ha). Regional estimates were: 0.221% in Northern and Yorke (NY, 8,400 ha), 0.122% in Eyre Peninsula (EP, 6,100 ha), 0.003% in South Australian Arid Lands (SAAL, 1,700 ha), 0.025% in Limestone Coast (LC, 700 ha), 0.499% in Green Adelaide (GA, 600 ha), 0.111% on Kangaroo Island (KI, 500 ha), 0.007% in Murraylands and Riverland (MR, 400 ha), and 0.062% in Hills and Fleurieu (HF, 300 ha) (bottom figure).

In 2020, coastal saltmarsh percentage cover was 0.019% statewide, but there is insufficient information to determine a trend.



Why is coastal saltmarsh important?

Coastal saltmarshes trap sediments and prevent coastal erosion. They also help to maintain coastal water quality, cycle nutrients, store carbon, and support coastal and marine biodiversity. They 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.

Coastal saltmarsh is also managed through activities such as revegetation, fencing, management of grazing and fire regimes, and controlling pest plants and animals.

For further information see: [technical information](#)



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