

# Marine protected areas



## Biodiversity | Coastal and marine

South Australia's environmental  
trend and condition report cards 2023



Trend  
**Stable**



Condition  
**Good**



Reliability  
**Excellent**

RESPONSE

### Trend

The statewide trend in marine protected areas is considered stable based on spatial area and the level of protection.

The total area of South Australia's 19 marine parks has increased from 26,673 km<sup>2</sup> (44.3% of state waters) in 2012 to 27,031 km<sup>2</sup> (44.8%) in 2022 (top figure).

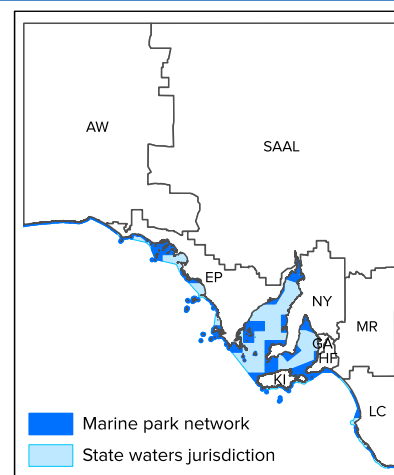
The state's marine park network includes multiple-use zones that aim to conserve marine biodiversity while providing environmental, economic, recreational and cultural benefits for local communities. It includes general-use zones (13.7% of state waters), habitat protection zones (24.9% of state waters), sanctuary zones (SZ, 5.1% of state waters) and restricted access zones (1.1% of state waters).

Changes to marine parks since 2020 include: increases in marine park areas to incorporate shellfish reefs at Windara and Glenelg; increasing the size of Nuyts Reef SZ; providing an additional fishing area in Clinton Wetlands SZ; decreasing the size of Cape du Couedic and North Neptune Islands SZs; and providing a special purpose area for commercial abalone fishing in the Isles of St Francis SZ.

### Condition

The protection of the marine environment by marine parks is considered good.

Marine parks are implemented in line with each of the 19 marine park management plans. Monitoring of a range of sea life, including fish, invertebrates, seagrass and macroalgae in marine parks is under way. Over time, this monitoring will track changes in the abundance, diversity, biomass and population structure of important species inside and outside sanctuary zones. Recent findings from South Australia's marine park 5-year status report indicate that the marine park network is on track to protect and conserve marine life.



South Australia's  
marine park protection  
is stable, with 44.8% of  
our waters protected,  
including 6.2% highly  
protected.



### Why are marine protected areas important?

South Australia's marine park network is important for the protection and conservation of marine biodiversity. Marine parks also enable sustainable development and the use of marine resources, and provide opportunities for recreation, nature-based tourism, education and appreciation of the marine environment.

### What are the pressures?

The marine park network protects marine ecosystems from a range of pressures, e.g. population growth, coastal pollution and development, overfishing, habitat modification, mining exploration, and invasive species.

Management of protected areas requires a balance of social, economic and environmental outcomes and consideration of how competing uses may impact biodiversity conservation goals.

Pressures on protected areas will increase under a changing climate.

### What is being done?

Restrictions on activities in 85 marine park sanctuary zones are expected to have long-term conservation benefits. Monitoring for ecological changes is under way, with data inside and outside sanctuary zones being collected. Marine parks are patrolled to educate the community and ensure compliance, which is critical to the future success of marine parks. In 2021–22, around 1500 patrols were undertaken in marine park sanctuary zones through a combination of shore, boat and aerial patrols.

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



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Government of  
South Australia