

# 2016 State Report Card

## Are the extent and condition of our seagrass improving?

The marine environment provides valuable resources for regional economies, is culturally important to Aboriginal people, and supports tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, shipping and mining. Most South Australians live near the coast and many coastal and marine systems are under pressure from human impacts.

Seagrass traps sediment, reduces wave energy and prevents coastal erosion, thereby protecting coastal infrastructure, and saving millions of dollars in coastal protection strategies. It also cycles nutrients, stores carbon and provides food and shelter for numerous marine animals.

Seagrass is threatened by poor water quality, due to increases in nutrients, sediment loads and turbidity. These are caused by stormwater, treated sewage, and agricultural runoff, as well as industrial discharges and aquaculture. Disturbance by trawling, boat moorings and dredging are also potential threats.

The health of our seagrass relies on the management of water quality within catchments, and management of activities that cause physical disturbance.



Regional trends in the condition of seagrass



State target

Improve condition of coastal and marine ecosystems

### Trend in condition (2009–14)

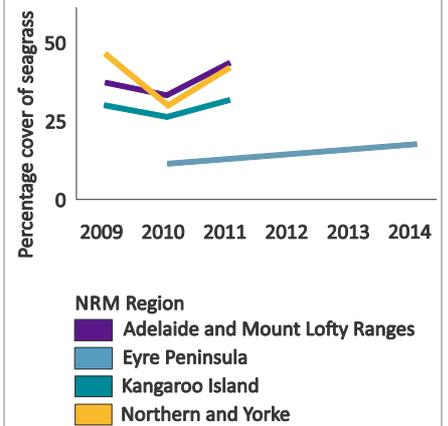
Stable

The condition of seagrass remained stable in the areas that were studied

The condition of seagrass in the Northern and Yorke, Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island NRM regions was stable between 2009–11 and stable between 2010–14 in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges region (graph on right). Trends in the condition of seagrass in other NRM regions are unknown.

Long-term losses of seagrass have been confirmed on populated coasts where the impacts of decreased water quality have been the most intense. Off the Adelaide metropolitan coast, nutrients entering coastal waters caused over 6000 hectares of seagrass to be lost between 1949 and 2007. Recent mapping studies off Adelaide suggest seagrass extent may have stabilised since 2007. Large-scale seagrass loss (13,000 hectares) due to low tides and extreme temperatures has also been recorded on western Yorke Peninsula since 1987 (map below).

Overall statewide trends in seagrass loss match those recorded worldwide, with seagrass now covering about two thirds of its former area globally.



### Where we are at (2011) – Extent

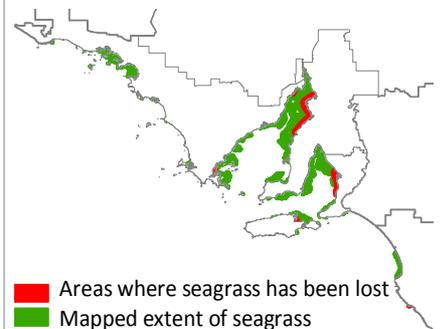
Unknown

Seagrass loss has occurred in many NRM regions, but across the State the extent of seagrass loss is unknown

Seagrass loss has been recorded in many areas where it has been studied. The precise extent of seagrass in many NRM regions is largely unknown.

The Environment Protection Authority is monitoring the condition of seagrass. When seagrass cover was last measured (graph above right) it averaged 40 per cent on Northern and Yorke, 30 per cent on Kangaroo Island, 15 per cent on Eyre Peninsula and 38 per cent in Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM regions. These results were consistent with previous assessments. When first measured by Environment Protection Authority in 2015, seagrass cover in the South East was 29 per cent.

An interagency review of seagrass research is underway, and government agencies are working with the community to improve the extent and condition of seagrass.



### Reliability of information



Good

Further information: [Technical information for this report card](#), [EPA ecosystem condition reports](#)

