

2016 State Report Card

Diseases affecting our native plants and animals

Diseases that affect our native plants and animals can have devastating impacts, and some of these diseases can even affect our own health. Diseases can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa or parasites.

Infection of amphibians with chytrid fungus and dieback of plants caused by root-rotting water moulds (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) have been listed nationally as *Key Threatening Processes* because they may have contributed to the extinction of some native plants and animals and are a threat to the survival of others. The prevalence and impact of some diseases can be made worse by habitat fragmentation, pollution, weeds, competition with pest species, droughts and climate change.

Diseases can be introduced on contaminated materials (e.g. footwear, vehicles, plants, soil) and the movement of infected animals or water. To protect our native plants and animals, disease outbreaks must be prevented and established diseases must be contained.



State trend in the number of native plant and animal diseases



State target:

Limit the establishment of pests and diseases and reduce the impacts of existing pests

Trend

Unknown

There is not enough information to determine trends for most diseases

Tracking diseases that affect our native plants and animals relies mainly on reports of suspicious outbreaks of illnesses or deaths or plant dieback. In most cases, this information is not enough for us to determine whether diseases are becoming more prevalent or not (summary on right).

Additional research has found that *Phytophthora*, a disease that causes dieback of our native plants in higher rainfall areas with neutral or acidic soil, is becoming more widespread.

A study in the Adelaide bioregion in 2014, confirmed chytrid fungus in six frog species, including three not previously confirmed as being affected by this disease.

Myrtle rust has not been recorded in South Australia. Legislation and management actively prevent the spread of Myrtle rust into high risk areas, such as the South East and Kangaroo Island Natural Resources Management regions.

Trends in diseases

↑ *Phytophthora* in plants and Chytridiomycosis in amphibians.

? Sarcoptic mange and alkaloid toxicity in wombats (pictured above), psittacine beak and feather disease in parrots, chlamydia and sarcoptic mange in koalas, and Mundulla yellows in plants.

Where we are at (2016)

Unknown

There is not enough information available to assess the impact of diseases

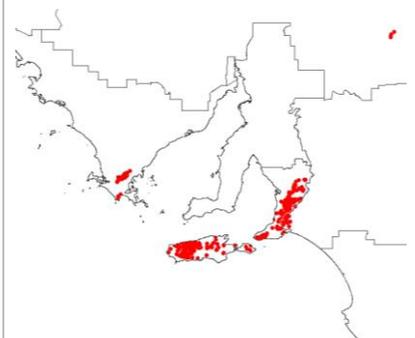
Phytophthora has been recorded in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management regions (see map on right).

Australian bat lyssavirus was recorded for the first time in a grey-headed flying-fox in 2012. This is not a surprising result, but a reminder for the public to avoid contact with bats. For information on Hendra virus in SA see the [PIRSA website](#).

Chlamydia was officially recorded for the first time in our koala population in 2012, and a recent study found an 88 per cent incidence of Chlamydia infection in a sample of koalas from the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges.

The extent of psittacine beak and feather disease is also largely unknown, but it has been recorded in our cockatoos and lorikeets.

In 2014, a number of southern hairy-nosed wombats were found to be suffering from alkaloid toxicity, particularly juveniles. Naive young wombats likely fed on toxic weed species that were plentiful in the degraded habitat, led to malnutrition and alkaloid toxicity (pictured above).



Area where *Phytophthora* has been recorded

Reliability of information



Good

Further information: [Technical information for this report card](#), [Wildlife Health Australia](#)



