

# 2014 Regional Snapshot

## Is the condition of our estuaries improving?

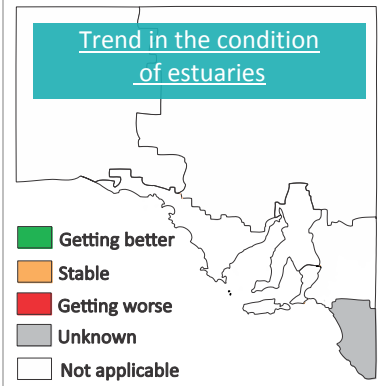
The marine environment provides valuable resources for regional economies, supporting tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, shipping and mining. Most South Australians live near the coast and many coastal and marine systems are under pressure from human impacts.

An estuary is a partly enclosed coastal body of water formed where freshwater water from on or under the land mixes with seawater. Estuaries range in size from a few to hundreds of hectares and can form bays, lagoons, harbours, inlets and gulfs.

We value estuaries for their scenic beauty and as places for recreation, tourism, fisheries, aquaculture and transport. Saltmarsh, mangrove and seagrass habitats are common in estuaries, and help to maintain coastal water quality by filtering sediments, nutrients and pollutants. Estuaries also soften the impact of floods and storms and provide food and shelter for marine animals, including commercial fish in their juvenile stages.

The condition of estuaries depends on activities in their catchments. Estuaries in the South East NRM region are affected by declines in water quantity and quality. Stormwater, industrial and sewage discharges, seepage and agricultural runoff can increase the amount of nutrients, pollutants and sediments going into the water. Estuaries are also affected by removal of riverbank vegetation, over-grazing by stock, coastal developments, construction of tidal barriers, soil erosion, water diversion and fishing.

The health of estuaries relies on management of water quality within catchments, coastal developments, grazing and fishing.



State target

Improve condition of coastal and marine ecosystems

### Trend

Unknown

Ongoing efforts will be needed to monitor and protect our estuaries

Of the 104 estuaries identified in South Australia, 8 are in the South East NRM region. Changes in the condition of estuaries in all NRM regions since they were last assessed in 2001 are not known (map above).

### Where we are at (2001)

Very poor

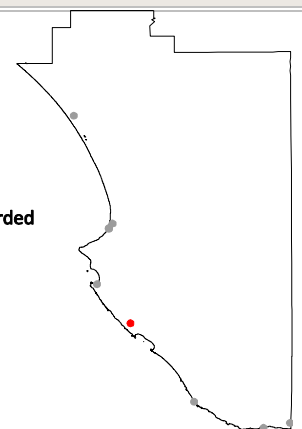
South Australia has some of the most extensively modified estuaries of all Australian states

Of the 8 estuaries in South East NRM region, 1 estuary (Lake George – which comprises approximately 97 per cent of the region’s estuarine habitat by area) was assessed for the National Land and Water Resources Audit in 2001 (map on right). Based on this assessment, the condition of Lake George was rated as ‘very poor’, with a score of 25 out of 100 (where 100 represents undisturbed condition).

The Coorong forms part of the [Murray Mouth estuary](#) which extends slightly into the South East NRM region. The Coorong is managed by the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board and the [Government of South Australia](#). The Coorong National Park is managed by the South East NRM region.

#### Estuary condition

- Very good
- Good
- Poor
- Very poor
- No condition recorded



### Reliability of information



Fair

#### Further information:

[Technical information for this report](#), [Ozcoasts information \(estuary search\)](#), [Information for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth](#)