

2014 State Report Card

What is the ecological condition of our rivers, streams and drains?

Our rivers, streams and drains provide water for agriculture and domestic use, habitats for native plants and animals, places for recreation and are culturally important for Aboriginal people.

Aquatic plants and animals function together as ecological communities and improve water quality in rivers, streams and drains. These ecosystems are impacted by nutrients, sediments and pollutants in agricultural runoff and wastewater discharges. Feral and domestic animals, which graze and trample vegetation, and reductions in flow, due to dams, weirs, droughts, [consumptive use](#) and weeds, also impact rivers, stream and drains.

The Environment Protection Authority has assessed the condition of streams and drains in South Australia based on water quality and the condition of invertebrate and plant communities. Assessments have been made at 348 sites, across 19 catchments, in all of the NRM regions except Alinytjara Wilurara. This report card summarises the information by catchment basins.

This report card does not address the condition of wetlands or the River Murray. The [water quality](#) and [ecological condition](#) of the River Murray are reported separately.



Regional trends in the ecological condition of rivers, streams and drains



State target

Improve the condition of terrestrial aquatic ecosystems

Trend (2008–13)

Unknown

River, stream and drain condition was assessed between 2008-13. A trend will be available in future versions of this report card.

Because most sites have only been assessed once, recent trends in river, stream and drain condition are not known for any NRM region (map above). Future monitoring will determine trends in the condition of our rivers, streams and drains.

The Government of South Australia and the regional NRM boards are investing to improve water quality and the condition of invertebrate and plant communities. Management focuses on controlling feral animals and weeds, fencing stream edges, working with land holders to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and, where possible, restoring more natural flows.

Where we are at (2013)

Fair

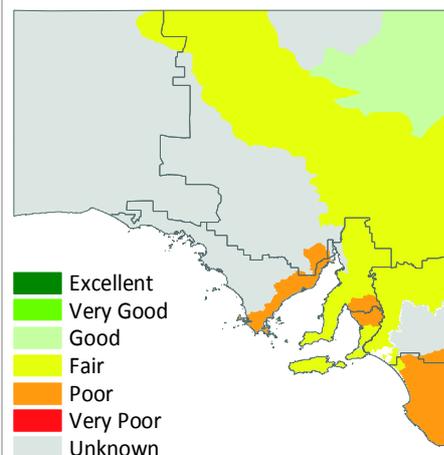
Substantial investments are required over many years to improve water quality, and the condition of aquatic invertebrate and plant communities

On average across the State, our rivers, streams and drains are in fair condition (map on right).

The catchments for our rivers, streams and drains are in poor or fair condition in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, Eyre Peninsula, South East, Northern and Yorke, Kangaroo Island and SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM regions (map on right). The catchments in the SA Arid Lands NRM region are in fair or good condition.

Rivers, streams and drains that are in poor condition typically have elevated levels of nutrients, salt and fine sediment as well as sparse vegetation and abundant weeds along their banks.

Our use of aquatic environments for economic and recreation purposes has affected the features that make them so attractive and valuable. In some areas, consumptive use of [surface water](#) and other impacts are at critical levels, and these are intensified during droughts. It is crucial that we continue to improve our rivers, streams and drains.



Reliability of information



Very Good

Further information: [Technical information for this report card](#) and [EPA Aquatic Ecosystems Water Quality reports](#)

