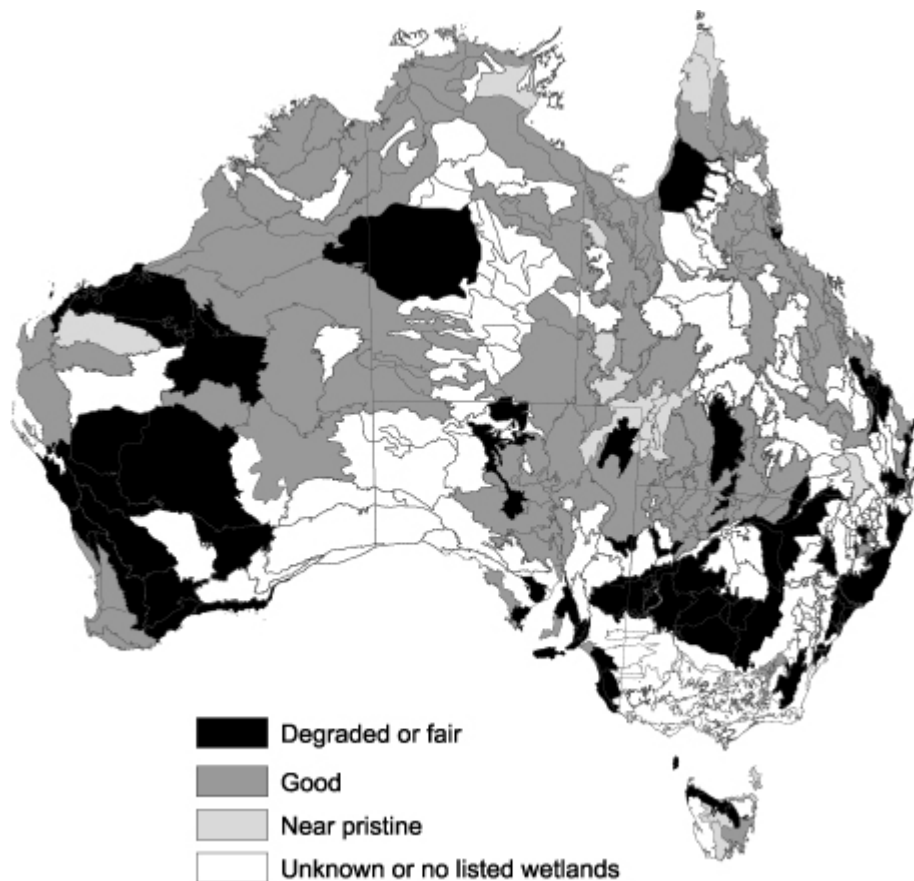


## 34. CONDITION OF WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES IN AUSTRALIA

### WETLANDS

The Audit's Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment assessed the condition and trend of nationally important wetlands (those listed under the *Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia 2001*) and the threatening processes affecting them. Regionally important wetlands (those not listed as nationally important, but are significant nonetheless) were also identified and assessed, as they are often lost to incremental land development.

- In northern Australia, the condition of nationally important wetlands is generally good (58% of subregions assessed). In southern Australia, many wetlands (28% of subregions assessed) require significant management actions to bring about their recovery. (Map 1)
- The trend of wetlands in 38% of subregions is declining.
- Grazing pressure, exotic weeds and feral animals are the most common threats to wetlands.
- Approximately 4700 regionally important wetlands were identified.



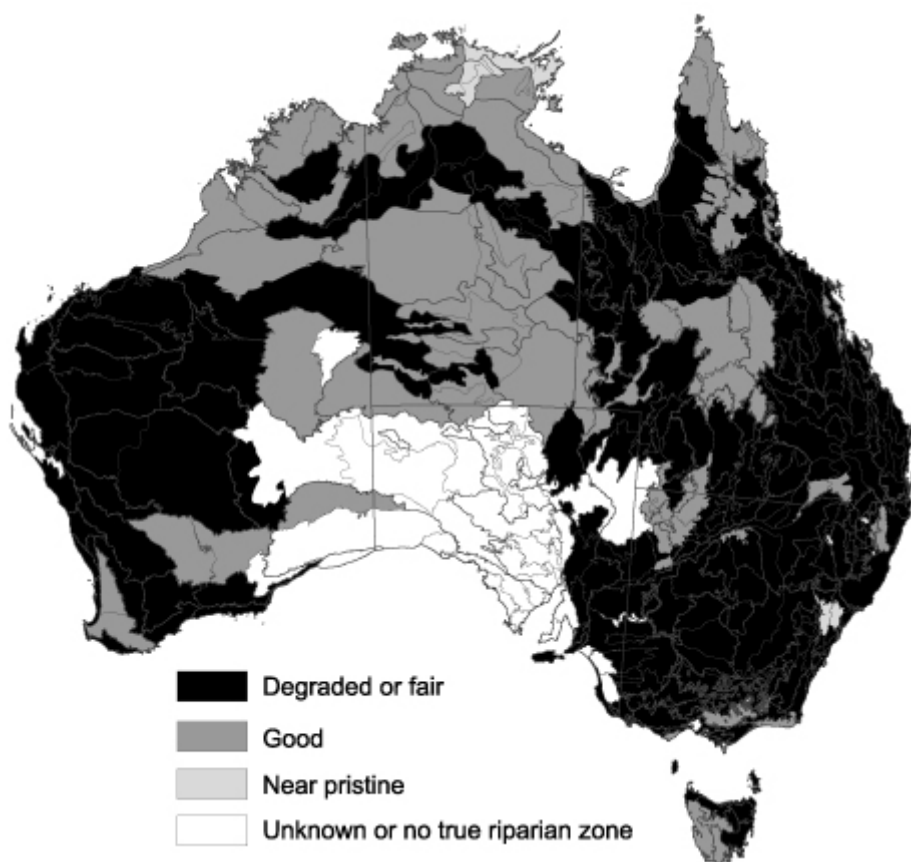
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Map 1: Condition of nationally important wetlands by subregion. A total of 987 wetlands were assessed.

## RIPARIAN ZONES

Riparian zones associated with watercourses and wetlands are diverse habitats, essential for the maintenance of biodiversity across the landscape.

- The condition of riparian zones is degraded for 31% of subregions assessed, and 38% of subregions are in fair condition and require significant management actions to bring about their recovery (Map 2).
- The trend of riparian zones is declining across Australia in 73% of subregions.
- Increased fragmentation is a particularly common threat to riparian zones in highly cleared regions of southern and eastern Australia. Overgrazing, exotic weeds, feral animals and changed fire regimes are also key threats.
- Targeted programs are needed to maintain and rehabilitate these vital resources.



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Map 2: Condition of riparian zones by subregion.

### Further Information:

See *Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment 2002* for more details.

Or go to the Australian Natural Resources Atlas ([www.environment.gov.au/atlas](http://www.environment.gov.au/atlas)).

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