

Shorebird and wetland habitat

In April 2024, the Australian Government committed \$17 million to the Shorebird and Wetland Habitat (SaWH) program to improve the quality and availability of shorebird habitat and wetland ecosystems across South Australia's Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) and south-east regions.

How SaWH will improve wetland habitat

The program consists of 25 distinct projects across 35 wetland sites, working with 12 partner organisations. Collectively, these projects will enhance habitat across both regions, creating a mosaic of critical foraging and breeding areas for local threatened species and migratory birds. This includes sites within the internationally important Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Wetland and along the East Asian–Australasian Flyway.

The program works with local groups, including landscape boards, community groups and First Nations peoples, to plan and deliver habitat restoration activities. The program focuses on smaller wetlands that cumulatively have the greatest impact at a regional scale. Activities include:

- removing barriers to flow and improving connectivity
- controlling weeds and revegetating with native species
- protecting habitats and reducing threats
- supporting First Nations' connection to Country
- building new infrastructure to improve water management and keep wetlands healthy.

On-ground works are scheduled for completion by the end of 2026.



Milang Snipe Sanctuary
(photo: Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board)

Why the program is important

Decreases in the diversity and abundance of waterbirds (including threatened and migratory species) in the CLLMM and south-east have been linked to declines in the quality and quantity of suitable habitat.

The program is important as it will deliver a range of localised, on-ground works and activities to increase the availability of quality shorebird habitat, maintain food webs, provide critical foraging and breeding habitat for waterbirds and other threatened species, and improve wetland ecosystems across both regions. The expected outcomes include:

- increasing the area and duration of quality shorebird habitat and wetland ecosystems at a regional scale
- enhancing the diversity of shorebird habitat and wetland ecosystems for various climatic and environmental conditions
- improving landscape resilience by maintaining food webs and enhancing habitats that support breeding conditions for foraging waterbirds
- reducing threats to the recruitment and survival of wetland species, including biosecurity risks
- enhancing wetland resilience at a landscape scale
- strengthening the ability of First Nations peoples to connect to Country, fulfil cultural obligations in Caring for Country, and achieve cultural outcomes
- fostering landholder connections to environmental outcomes and the regional landscape
- reinforcing Australia's commitment to international obligations, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership, by increasing available habitat for migratory birds and other threatened species.

Photo above: Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board

First Nations partnerships

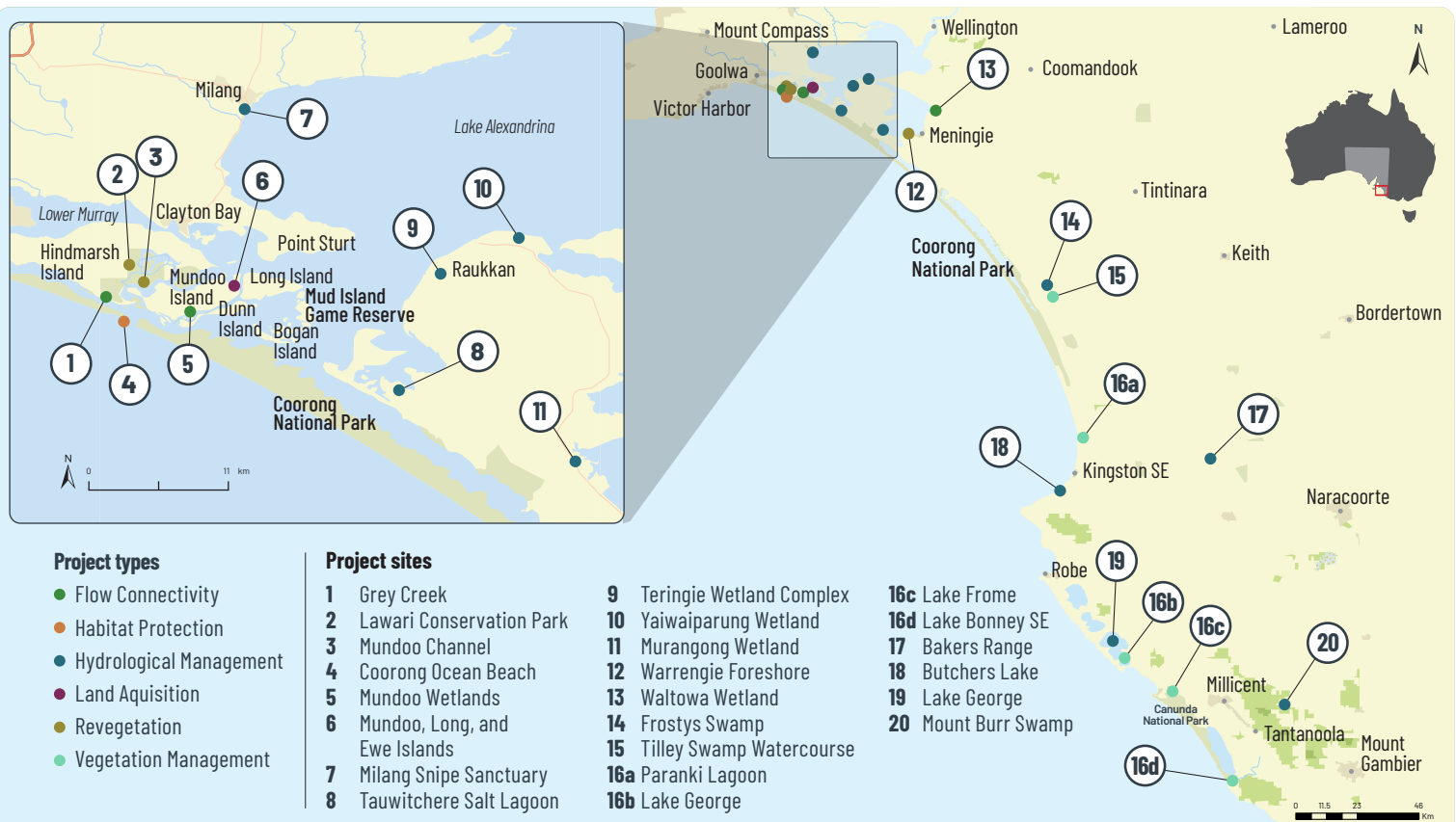
The program aims to help First Nations communities strengthen their connection to Country and meet their rights, interests and cultural obligations in caring for Country. Engagement and collaboration with First Nations partners are critical elements of the program.

Ngarrindjeri and First Nations of the south-east (FNSE) are the Traditional Owners of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and south-east regions respectively. The program builds on strong working relationships with First Nations representative bodies, including Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation (representing the Ngarrindjeri Nation), No:ri Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (RNTBC for the Ngarrindjeri Part B and FNSE #2 overlap determination area), and Burrardies Aboriginal Corporation (representing FNSE).

The program will continue to strengthen and grow these partnerships through ongoing collaboration and involvement. This will help preserve and promote First Nations culture and build capacity to apply their cultural knowledge, values and interests in the development and implementation of the program.

The partnership with each First Nations group will be unique, recognising differences in the geographic area of their Country, Native Title, governance structures and their self-identified interests.

Individual projects have associated cultural heritage and First Nations engagement requirements, tailored and informed through direct collaboration with the relevant First Nations representative bodies.



More information

To find out more, scan the QR code or visit environment.sa.gov.au/SaWH

To get in touch, email the us at DEW.ShorebirdsAndWetlands@sa.gov.au

Delivery partners

Limestone Coast Landcare Board | South Eastern Water Conservation and Drainage Board | Birdlife Australia | Kumarangk Hindmarsh Island Landcare group | Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Aboriginal Corporation | Second Nature Conservancy | Nature Glenelg Trust | Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board | Burrardies Aboriginal Corporation | Raukkan Community Council | Coorong District Council | Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation | Alexandrina Council | Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board.

The Shorebird and Wetland Habitat program is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by the Government of South Australia to enhance the quality and availability of shorebird habitat and wetland ecosystems across the Coorong, Lower Lakes, Murray Mouth and South East regions of South Australia.



Australian Government



Government of South Australia

Department for Environment and Water