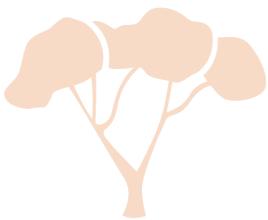




ONCE ESTABLISHED
THERE IS NO
SINGLE CONTROL
METHOD FOR
THE SUCCESSFUL
MANAGEMENT OF
BUFFEL GRASS IN
LARGE AREAS.



BUFFEL GRASS

A major threat to biodiversity, buffel grass is an introduced perennial grass that has spread beyond planted areas and altered native vegetation.

KEY POINTS

- Buffel grass invades natural ecosystems changing the vegetation structure and composition
- Buffel grass is spreading in the South Australian arid lands
- Prevention of further spread is important because once buffel grass is established it is difficult and costly to control

IDENTIFICATION

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is an erect, deep-rooted, tussock-forming, summer-growing perennial.

Seed heads are dense, white to purple in colour, growing in a spike-like raceme up to 15cm long and are covered in clusters of bristles giving them a fluffy appearance.

The flowering heads appear from November to May or sporadically following rain.

DISTRIBUTION

Buffel grass is widely distributed across South Australia's Arid Lands region, with the highest densities occurring in the north-west.

Natural expansion of these populations is continuing.

Scattered populations also exist at numerous remote locations in the region.

These are persisting from seed introduced onto pastoral properties as far back as 50 years ago.

Many of these populations have not significantly spread, and the risk of them doing so is unknown.

IMPACTS

Buffel grass aggressively colonises riparian habitats where it forms dense monocultures, displacing native vegetation.

It can directly affect native floral diversity and composition and threatens plant and animal communities that are not adapted to fire, by increasing the intensity and frequency of natural fire regimes.





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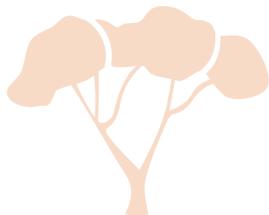
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Buffel grass dominated landscapes can also impact native fauna species.

CONTROL

Control of buffel grass in South Australia's Arid Lands region presents a considerable challenge.

This is due to a range of factors including the plant's current distribution, its physiological and ecological characteristics, environmental conditions, the vastness of the region, the land uses present, and the relatively low level of community understanding regarding the potential long-term impacts of this species.

The continued establishment and spread of buffel grass in the region is difficult to stop.

To protect uninfested areas, early intervention is the key.

If buffel grass is controlled during the early stages of invasion, the potential for successful management is high.

Once established, there is no single control method for the successful management of buffel grass in large areas.

A combination of methods or an integrated control program is required.

Control methods will depend on the size of the infestation and where it is located and the asset to be protected.

BUFFEL GRASS MANAGEMENT

Buffel grass management aims to assist in protecting the integrity of the region's native vegetation and ecosystem function.

Key management strategies aim to:

- Prevent further spread of buffel grass by targeting key pathways of movement.
- Reduce the density and extent of established buffel grass infestations by allocating priority to sites of high conservation value.

RESOURCES

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) 2008, Weed Management Guide; managing weeds for biodiversity, CRC for Australian Weed Management

Buffel grass affects native floral diversity

