

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED



Seagrasses are often at the downstream end of catchments, receiving runoff from a range of agricultural, urban and industrial land-uses. As seagrass responds in a predictable manner to changes in water and environmental quality, they can be monitored and used as an indicator of environmental health.

There are usually four monitoring periods per year (every 3 months) and one monitoring session generally takes about two hours during low tide to complete.

If you would like to take part in the program, visit [www.seagrasswatch.org](http://www.seagrasswatch.org) for further information and to register online. On the website you can keep up to date on latest news and information in the Seagrass-Watch community, not just locally but globally. You can also download the latest Seagrass-Watch information, manuals and publications.

**Seagrass-Watch HQ** is the core of the program. Its role is to provide technical/scientific support, training, data management/validation/interpretation, and to ensure QAQC protocols are followed so that data is of high quality and time/resources are not wasted.

## THE GOALS OF SEAGRASS-WATCH:



*To educate the wider community on the importance of seagrass resources*



*To raise awareness of coastal management issues*



*To build the capacity of local stakeholders in the use of standardised scientific methodologies*



*To conduct long-term monitoring of seagrass & coastal habitat condition*



*To provide an early warning system of coastal environment changes for management.*



*To support conservation measures which ensure the long-term resilience of seagrass ecosystems*

### Contact Us



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## Raising awareness

### What is Seagrass-Watch?

Seagrass-Watch is the largest scientific, non-destructive, seagrass assessment and monitoring program in the world. Since its genesis in 1998 in Australia, Seagrass-Watch has expanded internationally, with participants to date in the Asia Pacific. Monitoring is currently occurring at over 150 sites.



Seagrass-Watch aims to raise awareness on the condition and trend of nearshore seagrass ecosystems and provide an early warning of major coastal environment changes.



Seagrass-Watch monitoring efforts are vital to assist with tracking global patterns in seagrass health, and assess the human impacts which have the potential to destroy or degrade these coastal ecosystems and decrease their yield of natural resources. Responsive management based on adequate information will help to prevent any further significant areas and species being lost. To protect the valuable seagrass meadows along our coasts, everyone must work together



Participants of Seagrass-Watch are from a wide variety of backgrounds and all share the common interest in marine conservation. Most participants are associated with universities & research institutions, government (local & state) or non-government organisations, established local community groups and schools.



Seagrass-Watch also integrates with existing education, government, non-government and scientific programs to raise awareness and preserve these important marine ecosystems for the benefit of all. The program has a strong scientific underpinning with an emphasis on consistent data collection, recording and reporting. Scientific, statistical, data management, data interpretation and logistic support underpins all monitoring efforts.



### What is Seagrass?

Seagrasses are a grouping of flowering plants that live in the coastal waters of the worlds' continents. They grow in sediment on the sea floor with erect, elongate leaves and a buried root-like structure (rhizomes).

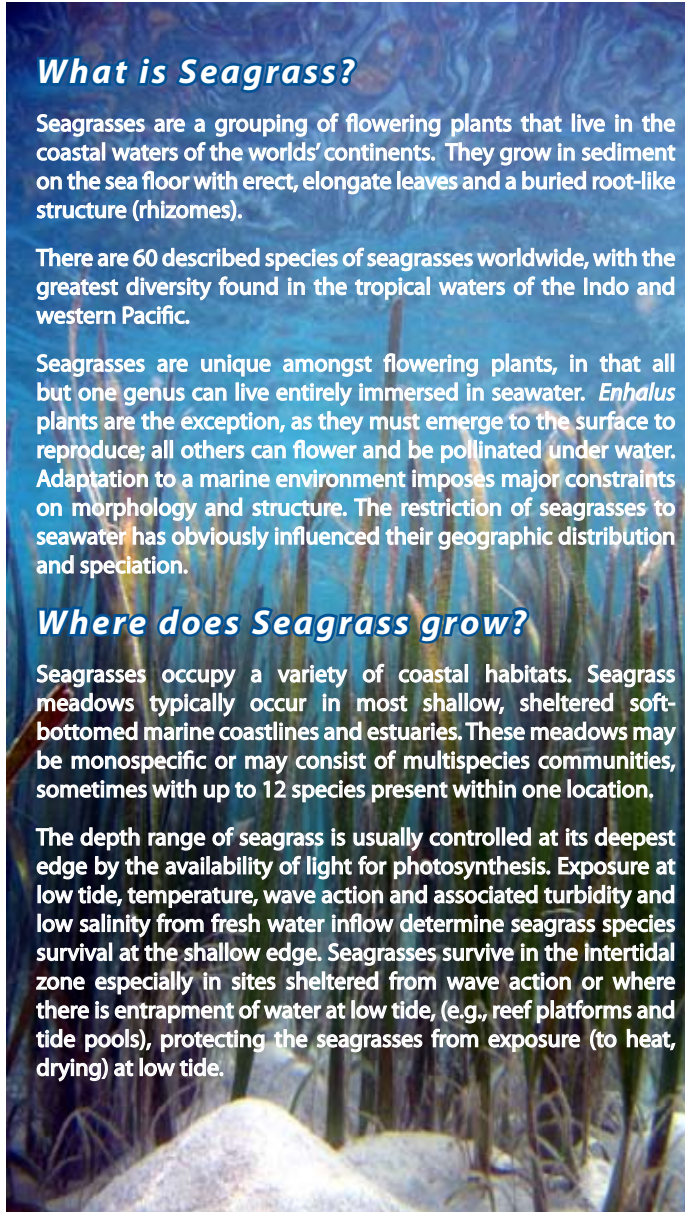
There are 60 described species of seagrasses worldwide, with the greatest diversity found in the tropical waters of the Indo and western Pacific.

Seagrasses are unique amongst flowering plants, in that all but one genus can live entirely immersed in seawater. *Enhalus* plants are the exception, as they must emerge to the surface to reproduce; all others can flower and be pollinated under water. Adaptation to a marine environment imposes major constraints on morphology and structure. The restriction of seagrasses to seawater has obviously influenced their geographic distribution and speciation.

### Where does Seagrass grow?

Seagrasses occupy a variety of coastal habitats. Seagrass meadows typically occur in most shallow, sheltered soft-bottomed marine coastlines and estuaries. These meadows may be monospecific or may consist of multispecies communities, sometimes with up to 12 species present within one location.

The depth range of seagrass is usually controlled at its deepest edge by the availability of light for photosynthesis. Exposure at low tide, temperature, wave action and associated turbidity and low salinity from fresh water inflow determine seagrass species survival at the shallow edge. Seagrasses survive in the intertidal zone especially in sites sheltered from wave action or where there is entrapment of water at low tide, (e.g., reef platforms and tide pools), protecting the seagrasses from exposure (to heat, drying) at low tide.



## Protecting Seagrasses

### Why Conserve Seagrass?

Seagrasses on reef flats and near estuaries are nutrient sinks, buffering or filtering nutrient and chemical inputs to the marine environment. They also stabilise coastal sediments, provide food and shelter for many organisms, and are a nursery ground for commercially important prawn and fish species.



The high primary production rates of seagrasses are closely linked to the high production rates of associated fisheries. These plants support numerous herbivore- and detritivore-based food chains, and are considered very productive pastures of the sea. The associated economic values of seagrass meadows are very large, although not always easy to quantify.

