HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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.

Seagrass-Watch HQ

Seagrass-Watch HQ is the core of the program. It provides technical/ scientific support, training, data management/ validation/ interpretation, and ensures QAQC protocols are followed so that data is of high quality and time/resources are not wasted.

For more information visit:
www.seagrasswatch.org

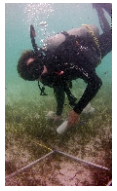
THE GOALS OF SEAGRASS-WATCH

To educate the wider community on the importance of seagrass resources

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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Seagrass-Watch

www.seagrasswatch.org

Global Seagrass Observing Network

SEAGRASS-WATCH SCIENTIFIC MONITORING

What is Seagrass-Watch?

Seagrass-Watch: Global Seagrass Observing Network partners scientists with citizens to accurately monitor the status and trends in seagrass condition. 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.

Participants are associated with universities & research institutions, government (local & state) or non-government organisations and established local community groups. They share a common interest in marine conservation.

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 are Seagrasses?

Seagrasses are unique marine flowering plants of which there are approximately 60 species worldwide. Various common names are applied to seagrass species, such as turtle grass, eelgrass, tape grass, spoon grass and shoal grass. Seagrasses are not seaweeds. Seaweed is the common name for algae.

Seagrass live in sheltered coastal waters, undergo pollination while submerged and complete their entire life cycle underwater. They grow much like land grasses, with extensive below ground rhizomes or runners. Plants form small patches that develop into large continuous meadows. These meadows may consist of one or many species, sometimes up to 12 species present within one location.

Because seagrass requires sunlight, most seagrass is found in clear shallow waters. Seagrasses survive in the intertidal zone especially in locations sheltered from wave action or where there is pooling of water at low tide, (e.g., reef platforms and tide pools), which protects seagrass from elevated temperatures and drying.

Protecting Seagrass

Seagrasses are **economically and ecologically** valuable to both humans and marine life. Seagrass is one of the most productive natural ecosystems in the world.

Seagrasses **improve water quality** by acting as nutrient sinks, buffering or filtering nutrient and chemical inputs to the marine environment. They also **stabilise** coastal sediments, helping to avert erosion.

Seagrasses provide **food and shelter** for many organisms (shrimps, crabs, worms, snails and small fish) and are a nursery ground for **commercially important** prawn and fish species. Larger fish and seabirds visit seagrass meadows to feed. Endangered sea turtles and dugongs also graze on seagrass.

Seagrass meadows are fragile ecosystems. Human impacts such as excessive pollution from sewage discharge, oil spills, herbicides, coastal runoff, dredging, boat propellers and anchors/moorings can damage or destroy seagrasses.