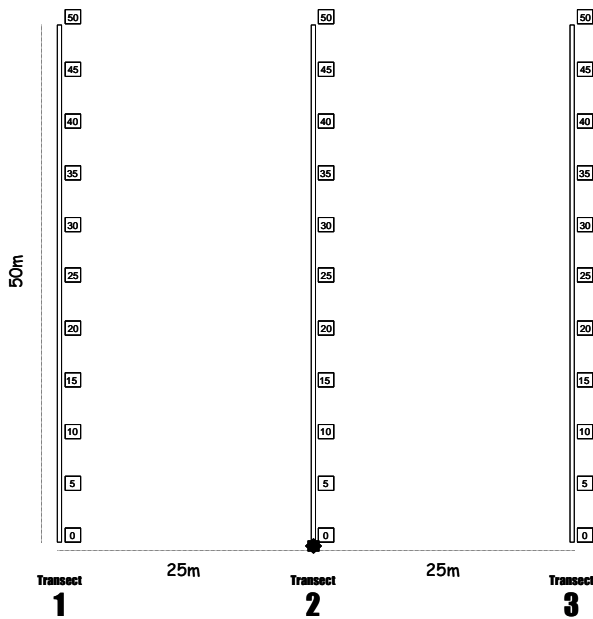


Permanent-transect monitoring protocols

Source: McKenzie et al. 2003 (<https://www.seagrasswatch.org/manuals/>)

Site layout



Quadrat code = site + transect+quadrat
e.g., YP1225 = Yule Pt, site 1, transect 2, 25m quadrat

Pre-monitoring preparation

Have a Contact Person

Create a timetable of times of departure and arrival back, and what the objective of the day is and what is to be achieved on the day. Give a copy of this to all participants involved in advance so they can make their arrangements to get to the site on time. List on this timetable what participants need to bring.

Have a Contact Person

Arrange to have a reliable contact person to raise the alert if you and the team are not back at a specified or reasonable time.

Safety

- Assess the risks before monitoring - check weather, tides, time of day, etc.
- Use your instincts - if you do not feel safe then abandon sampling.
- Do not put yourself or others at risk.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.
- Be sun-smart.
- Be aware of dangerous marine animals.
- Have a first aid kit on site or nearby
- Take a mobile phone or marine radio

Necessary equipment and materials

- 3x 50 metre fibreglass measuring tapes
- 6x 50 cm plastic tent pegs
- compass
- 1x standard (50cm x 50cm) quadrat
- 3x monitoring datasheets
- clipboard, pencils & 30 cm ruler
- camera
- quadrat photo labeller
- percent cover standard sheets
- seagrass identification sheet

Each sampling event

Within the site, lay out the three 50 metre transects parallel to each other, 25 m apart and perpendicular to shore (see site layout). Within each of the quadrats placed every 5m along each transect for sampling, complete the following steps:

Step 1. Take a Photograph of the quadrat

- Photographs are taken of **every quadrat** along each transect. Use a quadrat free of strings and place the photo quadrat labeller beside the quadrat and tape measure with the correct code displayed.
- Take the photograph from an angle as **vertical** as possible, which includes the entire quadrat frame, quadrat label and tape measure. Fill the field of view as best as possible and avoid having any shadows or patches of reflection off any water. Check the photo taken box on datasheet for quadrat.

Step 2. Describe sediment composition

- Dig your fingers into the top centimetre of the substrate and feel the texture. Describe the sediment by noting the grain size in order of dominance (e.g., Sand, Fine sand, Fine sand/Mud).

Step 3. Describe other features and ID/count of macrofauna

- Note and count (whole numbers - never use < or > symbols) any features which may be of interest (e.g. gastropods, hermit crabs, dugong excavating, turtle cropping, crab burrows, worm holes, sediment ripples) within the comments column.
- If water covers half or more of the quadrat, measure depth in cm.

Step 4. Estimate seagrass percent cover

- Looking down on the quadrat from above, estimate the total percentage of the seabed (substrate) within the quadrat covered by seagrass leave. Estimate the footprint/shadow provided by the seagrass shoots.
- Always use the percent cover photo standards (calibration sheets) as your guide, estimating cover as accurate as possible, e.g. 27%, 61%. Remember, the lower the cover, the more accurate the measures.
- If cover is below 3%, you can count the seagrass shoots and calculate percent cover using the rule of approx 1 shoot = 0.1%. Please note: this will be greater for shoots of larger sized species.

Step 5. Estimate seagrass species composition

- Identify the species of seagrass within the quadrat and determine the percent contribution of each species (always start with least abundant species, total composition must equal 100%).
- Use seagrass species identification keys provided and use more than 1 feature to identify each species.

Step 6. Measure seagrass canopy height

- Measure canopy height (in centimetres) of the dominant strap-leaf species, ignoring the tallest 20%.
- Measure from the sediment to the leaf tip of 3 shoots, entering all 3 measures onto datasheet.

Step 7. Estimate algae percent cover

- Looking down on the quadrat from above, estimate the total percentage of the seabed (substrate) within the quadrat covered by macroalgae (independent of seagrass cover)
- Macroalgae is not **attached** to seagrass leaves and may be attached to rocks, shells or may be drifting.

Step 8. Estimate epiphyte percent cover

- Epiphytes are algae **attached** to seagrass blades and often give the blade a furry appearance.
- First estimate how much of an average seagrass leaf surface is covered, and then how many of the leaves/shoots in the quadrat are covered. For example, if 20% of the leaves are 50% covered by epiphytes, then quadrat epiphyte cover is 10%. Use the epiphyte matrix to assist you.
- Do not include epifauna with epiphytes. Epifauna are sessile animals attached to seagrass blades –record % cover of epifauna in the comments or an unused/blank column – do not add to epiphyte cover.

Step 9. Take a voucher seagrass specimen if required

- Place seagrass specimen in a labelled plastic bag with a little seawater and a waterproof label. Select a representative specimen of the species and ensure that you have all the plant parts including the rhizomes and roots. Collect plants with fruits and flowers structures if possible.

Step 10. Move to next quadrat

- Repeat steps 1 to 8 for the remaining 32 quadrats

Step 11. At completion of monitoring

- Check data sheets are filled in fully.
- Remove equipment from site (e.g. non-permanent pegs)

At completion of monitoring

Step 1. Wash & pack equipment

- Rinse all tapes, pegs and quadrats with freshwater and let them dry. Do this after every day of monitoring.
- Review supplies for next sampling and request new materials if needed.
- Store gear in a safe and dry place for next sampling event.

Step 2. Press any voucher seagrass specimens if collected

- The voucher specimen should be pressed as soon as possible after collection. Do not refrigerate longer than 2 days.
- Allow to dry in the herbarium press, in a dry/warm/dark place, for a minimum of two weeks. For best results, replace the newspaper after 2-3 days.

Step 3. Submit all data

- Data can be entered into the MS-Excel file downloadable from www.seagrasswatch.org. Email completed files to admin@seagrasswatch.org
- Mail original datasheets, photos and herbarium sheets

Seagrass-Watch HQ
For postal address, see
<https://www.seagrasswatch.org/contact/>

SEAGRASS-WATCH MONITORING



ONE OF THESE SHEETS IS TO BE FILLED OUT FOR EACH TRANSECT YOU SURVEY

START of transect (GPS reading)

Latitude: Longitude:

OBSERVER: Beverly Citizen DATE: 17/2/21
 LOCATION: Burnum Heads
 SITE code: BH1 TRANSECT no.: 2
 START TIME: 1304 END TIME: 1340

Quadrat (metres from transect origin)	Sediment (eg. mud/sand/shell)	Comments (eg. 10x gastropods, 4x crab holes, dugong feeding trails, herbartium specimen taken)	Seagrass coverage (%)	% Seagrass species composition			Canopy height (cm)	% Algae cover	% Epi- cover
				HO	HU	ZC			
1 (0m)	Sand	SCx3 PFTx1 HCx1	40	30	70		54.7	5	33
2 (5m)	FS/S	GASx2 Ray pt x2	33	50	50		616.6	10	18
3 (10m)	CS	Hcx3	0				-	0	-
4 (15m)	m/s	CHx10	0				-	17	-
5 (20m)	m/s	Turtle Groping GASx3	18	5	90	5	715.6	12	57
6 (25m)	m/s/sh	SCx3 mw x2	36		90	10	816.6	2	95
7 (30m)	Fine Sand	CHx9 GASx1	48	100			-	0	10
8 (35m)	CS/S	Nothing	0.7		100		615.5	0	36
9 (40m)	FS	Hcx2	23	96	4		551.6	5	38
10 (45m)	S/m	GASx2	41	3		97	818.7	3	90
11 (50m)	mud	CHx2 SCx1	16	3	7	90	717.8	38	95

END of transect (GPS reading)

Latitude: Longitude:

FS = Fine sand
 CS = Coarse Sand
 m = mud
 S = Sand
 sh = shell

SC = Sea cucumber
 HC = Hermit Crabs
 GAS = Gastropod
 CH = Crabs Hole
 mw = mud whorl
 CW = Green worm
 PFT = Dugong feeding trail

