

About seagrass

Seagrasses are the only marine flowering plant. There are approximately 60 seagrass species (possibly 72) globally that belong to four major groups. 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.

Help seagrass

There are many ways you can help: don't litter; be aware when applying fertilizers and pesticides, as excess amounts can wash down gutters and drain into the ocean; when boating, slow down and avoid shallow areas; support marine conservation initiatives; learn about these special marine habitats and volunteer to monitor their health by joining Seagrass-Watch.

Seagrass-Watch: Global Seagrass Observing Network 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.

To protect valuable seagrass meadows, everyone must work together.

Seagrasses in Butchulla Sea Country

Importance

Seagrass is one of the most productive natural ecosystems globally. Seagrasses are as important as forests in storing carbon (on an areal basis) and can store carbon 35 times faster than rainforests.

Seagrass occupy less than 0.2% of the world's oceans, but are responsible for more than 10% of all carbon in ocean sediments annually.

Seagrasses improve water quality by acting as nutrient sinks, buffering/filtering nutrient/chemical inputs to the marine environment. They also stabilise marine sediment and help avert erosion.

Seagrasses provide food and shelter for many organisms including Sea turtles and dugongs.

Contact

PO BOX 4
Clifton Beach, QLD 4879
admin@seagrasswatch.org

www.seagrasswatch.org



Local eyes. Global wise





Dugong grazing trails (note flipper marks) in *Nanozostera muelleri* meadow on intertidal banks at Urangan, Hervey Bay

Butchulla

The Butchulla people are the Custodians, Traditional Owners and the Common Law Holder of K'gari (formerly Fraser Island) and surrounding areas.

Butchulla sea country covers ~865 km² and includes the Great Sandy Strait (excluding the very southern reaches of Tin Can Inlet) and the southern nearshore area of Hervey Bay (Burrum Heads to Urangan) to the 2m bathymetric contour.

Sea Country

Nine species of seagrass are reported in the waters of the Great Sandy Marine Park and within Butchulla sea country: *Halodule uninervis*, *Halodule pinifolia*, *Halophila spinulosa*, *Halophila decipiens*, *Halophila ovalis*, *Nanozostera muelleri* (Syn.: *Zostera muelleri* subsp. *capricorni*), *Oceana serrulata* (Syn.: *Cymodocea serrulata*), *Ruppia maritima* and *Syringodium isoetifolium*.

The highest species diversity of seagrass in Butchulla sea country is found in the southern Great Sandy Strait.

Most species in the region are classified as colonising or opportunistic, capable of rapid recovery from losses due to fast asexual growth rates and capacity for generating large seed banks.

Only seagrass of the genus *Halophila* are found in waters deeper than 15m.

No seagrass species are listed as Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened or Data Deficient under the IUCN Red List criteria.

McKenzie, L.J. & Yoshida, R.L. (2024). Seagrass-Watch: Proceedings of a workshop for monitoring seagrass in Butchulla Sea Country. The Tree House - Urangan Community Wellness Centre, Hervey Bay, Queensland. 11-13 March 2024 (Seagrass-Watch HQ, Clifton Beach). 58pp.