

Dugongs  
consume approx.  
28-40 kg of  
seagrass per day

## 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.

# Roebuck Bay Seagrass

## About Us

Seagrass-Watch (est. 1998), a not-for-profit organisation highly recognised for its scientific rigour, is one of the largest long-term seagrass observing networks globally (Global Seagrass Observing Network).

More than 25 countries participate in the Global Seagrass Observing Network (GSON), monitoring & researching the status and trends in seagrass condition.

The GSON involves communities and groups who are interested/concerned about the health of local seagrass and fosters collaboration/partnerships among community members, scientists, and environmental practitioners.

## Contact

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Local eyes. Global wise



## 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 within one location.

## 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.

## Roebuck Bay seagrass

Seagrass communities are a critical component of the Roebuck Bay marine system, forming extensive meadows in the lower intertidal areas, particularly in the northern Bay. Dugongs and green turtles use the bay as a feeding and migration transit area. Roebuck Bay is also a major nursery for fishes and crustaceans, supporting an exceptionally high biomass and diversity of benthic invertebrates (approximately 300 – 500 species), placing it among the most diverse mudflats known in the world.

For the Yawuru traditional owners of Roebuck Bay, the Bay is of immense cultural importance due to the important food and ceremonial species it contains many which rely on seagrass (e.g., dugong), as well as the many connections to dreaming stories, law and other spiritual and cultural practices.

The extensive seagrass meadows in the northern regions of Roebuck Bay, particularly in the Town Beach area, are dominated by *Halophila ovalis* and *Halodule uninervis*. The most vigorous stands of seagrass grow in areas that are exposed for less than two hours at low tide.

McKenzie, G. & Yoshida, P.L. (2025) Seagrass-Watch. Proceedings of a workshop for monitoring seagrass habitats in the Kimberley region, Western Australia. Broome Lotteries House, Broome, Western Australia, 22-24 August 2025. (Seagrass-Watch HQ, Cairns) 62pp.

