

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 Dhimurru 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

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Local eyes. Global wise



Yolŋu Wanga Watangu

The Yolŋu people are the Custodians and Traditional Owners of land and sea estates in the Gove Peninsula region of North East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

In 2000, the Yolŋu in North East Arnhem announced the dedication of some 101,000 hectares of land (92,000 ha) and marine (9,000 ha) estate surrounding the Gove Peninsula for inclusion in the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). It was the first IPA in Australia to include both land and sea.

In April 2013, Yolŋu Wanga Watangu (Traditional Owners) formally dedicated additional areas of their land and sea country to the Dhimurru IPA, which included sea country extending 40km out to sea from the coastline.

Dhimurru IPA sea country covers 432,596 hectares, and is managed by the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation; an indigenous community based natural and cultural resource management agency. The sustainable management of Dhimurru sea country in which the Yolŋu custodians' rights and responsibilities and interests are recognised and respected is the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporations highest priority.

Sea Country

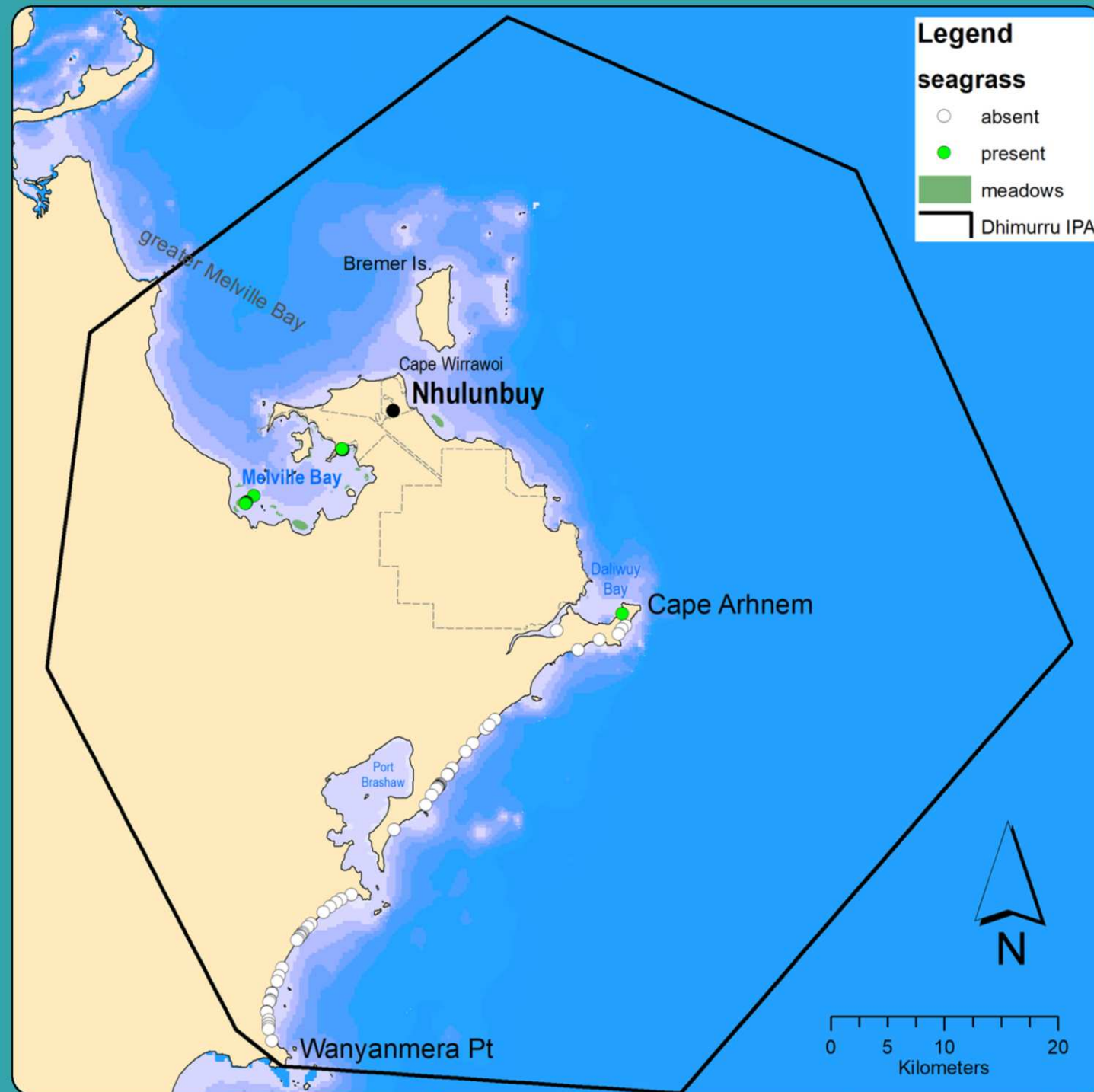
To date, six seagrass species have been reported from the Dhimurru IPA sea country, including: *Enhalus acoroides*; *Halophila decipiens*; *Halophila minor*; *Halophila ovalis*; *Halodule uninervis*; *Halodule pinifolia*.

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

Legend

seagrass

- absent
- present
- meadows
- ▭ Dhimurru IPA



Halophila decipiens



Halophila minor



Halophila ovalis



Enhalus acoroides



Halodule uninervis



Halodule pinifolia