

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.

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.

Port Curtis Coral Coast Seagrass

About Us

Seagrass-Watch: Global Seagrass Observing Network is one of the largest long-term seagrass observing programs globally, and is highly recognised for its scientific rigour.

Participants all share a passion in marine conservation.

Participants involved in the Global Seagrass Observing Network develop a deep sense of custodianship and understanding of their local marine environments that reaches throughout the wider community.

Contact

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Local eyes. Global wise



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.



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11 species of seagrass are reported in the PCCC: *Halodule uninervis*, *Halodule pinifolia*, *Halophila capricorni*, *Halophila decipiens*, *Halophila ovalis*, *Halophila minor*, *Halophila tricostata*, *Halophila spinulosa*, *Ruppia maritima*, *Syringodium isoetifolium* and *Nanozostera muelleri*. Two species (*Halodule pinifolia* and *Halophila minor*) are currently under review for synonymy.

The highest species diversity of seagrass in the PCCC is found in the waters of and surrounding Gladstone Harbour

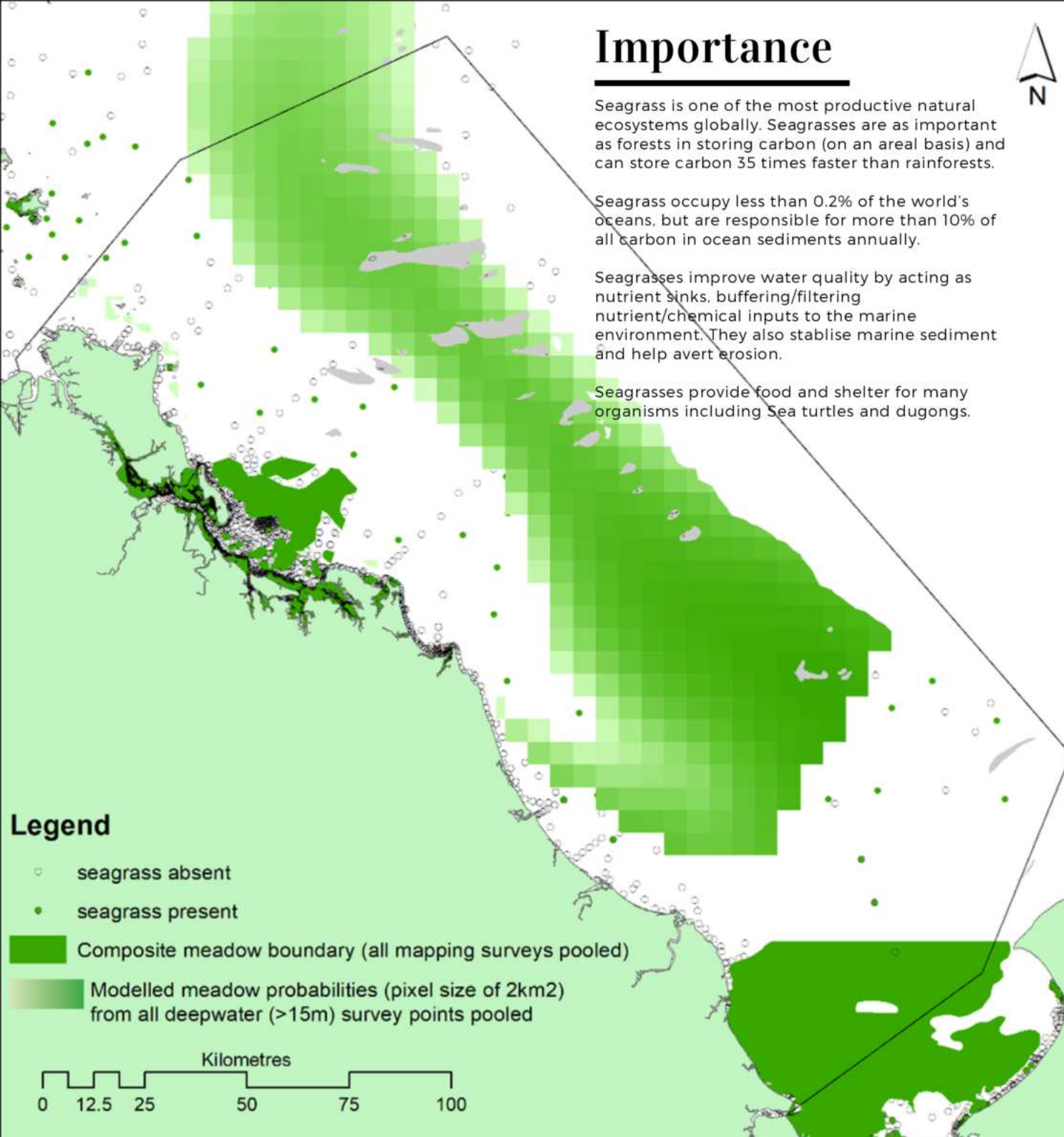
No species are listed as Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened or Data Deficient under the IUCN Red List criteria.

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. Previous large scale impacts have recovered within 3-5 years.

The greatest threats to seagrasses in the region, beside climate change, are anthropogenic, including agricultural runoff from catchments use intensively for agriculture and grazing, followed by urban and industrial runoff, urban port and infrastructure development, dredging, shipping accidents, bottom trawling, boat damage and other fishing methods.

Flood waters deliver terrestrially sourced pollutants (e.g. sediments, nutrients, pesticides) dispersing them over the sensitive ecosystems including seagrass meadows.

The seagrass meadows identified as at greatest risk of cumulative impact are all adjacent to population centres in sheltered north facing bays. Industrial ports are also located in sheltered bays and although heavily regulated contribute to pressures on seagrass meadows.



Legend

○ seagrass absent

● seagrass present

■ Composite meadow boundary (all mapping surveys pooled)

■ Modelled meadow probabilities (pixel size of 2km²) from all deepwater (>15m) survey points pooled

Kilometres

