



FACTSHEET

# Seagrass Meadows



ROTTNEST <sup>IS</sup> wildlife



# Seagrass Meadows



**Habitat type:** Seagrass Meadows

**Habitat description:**

Many large seagrass meadows are found in Rottnest's bays. These underwater meadows form a noticeable part of our marine coastal environment. There are nine species of seagrass found around Rottnest. Like meadows on land, seagrass meadows are highly productive and support extensive food webs. They also help with coastal stability.

There are 40 times more marine animals in seagrass meadows than in the bare sand.

Many different fish live in the meadows permanently like the Cobbler, Rough Leatherjacket and Gobbleguts. Sea turtles rest here and this habitat is also a nursery area for the juveniles of lots of species.

Seagrasses provide shelter for a number of molluscs and organisms among their roots and leaves. Top Shell and Dove Shell can be commonly found in Rottnest's seagrass meadows along with Decorator Crabs and Snapping or 'Pistol' Shrimps. Seaweed

or decorator crabs are common in the seaweed beds. They camouflage themselves by attaching seaweed to their bodies.

The recolonisation rates of seagrass meadows are very slow. It can take this habitat tens of years to regain its health after damage.

**Conservation Status:**

Some parts of Rottnest' seagrass meadows are included the Marine Sanctuary Zones shown in the *Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy 2007*.

**Local species:**

*Heterozostera tasmanica*, *Amphibolis griffithii*, *Amphibolis antarctica*, *Syringodium isoetifolium*, *Posidonia coriacea*, *Posidonia sinuosa*, *Thalassondendron pachyrhizum*, *Posidonia australis*, *Halophila ovalis*, Cobbler (*Cnidoglanis microcephalus*), Rough Leatherjacket (*Scobinichthys granulatus*), Gobbleguts (*Apogon rueppellii*), Decorator Crabs (*Naxia tumida*), Snapping/ Pistol Shrimps (*Alpheus villosus*), Top Shell





(*Thalotia conica*), Dove Shell (*Pyrene bidentate*), False Trumpet Shell (*Syrinx aruanus*).

### Threats:

- Reductions in light from the eutrophication process for a diagram explaining this process see [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/edexcel/problems\\_in\\_environment/pollutionrev4.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/science/edexcel/problems_in_environment/pollutionrev4.shtml)
- Storm damage.

Human impact caused by:

- Physical damage from dredging
- Anchors and motors
- Pollution
- Increased nutrient levels in water from incorrect sewage disposal

### DID YOU KNOW?

Seagrass meadows are 35 times more efficient at locking up (sequestering, or isolating) carbon than rainforests!

### HOW CAN I HELP?

Visitors can help protect Rottnest's marine meadows by taking care while swimming and snorkelling.

Not anchoring on seagrass.