



FACTSHEET

Eelgrass



Eelgrass

Common Name: Eelgrass/ Tasman Grass-wrack

Scientific Name: *Heterozostera tasmanica*

Conservation Status: Listed as Near Threatened under ICUN (2014). Some parts of Rottneest' seagrass meadows are included in the Marine Sanctuary Zones shown in the Rottneest Island Marine Management Strategy 2007.

Habitat: Seagrass meadows

Description:

Heterozostera tasmanica is common in the sand patches of sheltered bays of Rottneest. This plant has erect stems and light-green narrow leaves which measure 1-3 mm across and 5-25 cm long. Older plants are characterised by their thin dark wiry stems. *Heterozostera tasmanica* grows in meadows but these meadows tend to be less dense than those formed by *Posidonia Australis*.

Most of the animals that live in seagrass meadows do not eat the seagrass itself.

Rather, they eat the algae that grow on it, or prey on each other. The exception to this is the Green Turtle and Leatherjacket fish which feed directly on seagrass like the *Heterozostera tasmanica*.

Threats:

- Reductions in light from the eutrophication (breakdown of nutrients) process
- 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 is one of the biggest marine producers of oxygen.

