



FACTSHEET

Strapweed



Strapweed



Common Name: Southern Strapweed

Scientific Name: *Posidonia australis*

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

Habitat: Seagrass meadows

Description:

Posidonia australis is a slow growing dark green to purplish sea grass which forms meadows. These meadows have a low number of loosely packed shoots with upright-standing leaf blades. The leaf blades are ribbon like and measure 10-18 mm wide and up to 1 m long.

Despite their big leaves, 90% of the *Posidonia australis* plant actually exists in root form in the sandy or silty seabed. Nearer the seabed, there are more leaf blades closer together. Further up, these blades thin out creating an open canopy.

Posidonia australis grows in shallow coastal waters which are protected from high wave energy. It is found in water depths from 1-15 m. It can even grow in depths of 22 m in clear, non-polluted water.

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 *Posidonia australis*.

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?

Seagrasses like the *Posidonia australis* are descended from terrestrial plants which have invaded the sea. As such, they have flowers which are pollinated underwater.

Posidonia australis also produces large green fruits which can be found on the beach between November and January.