

Seagrass Monitoring

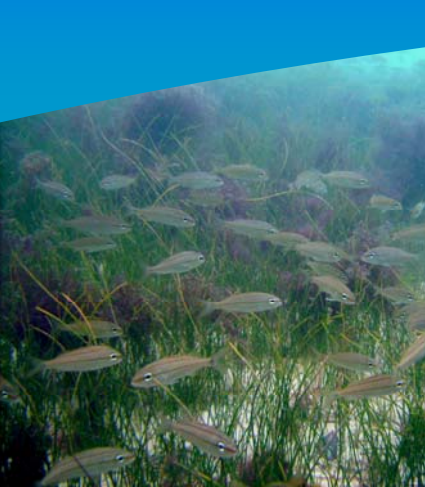


Photo by Kim Holzer



Project Objectives

To gain a better understanding of seagrass biology in Bermuda and how it is affected by natural processes and anthropogenic actions through sound scientific research.



Summary

Seagrass meadows provide essential habitat to many animals, including juvenile commercial fishes and endangered species such as green turtles and seahorses. Nearly 25% of the seagrass meadows on the Bermuda Platform were lost between 1993 and 2003 (Murdoch et al. 2007). This decline was similar to documented global rates of seagrass area losses ($3-7\% \text{ y}^{-1}$) recently compiled by an international team of scientists under the auspices of the U.S. National Science Foundation's National Centers for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) (Orth et al. 2006).

As a result of the local decline, seagrass has been listed for protection under the Bermuda Protected Species Act 2003 and a comprehensive Seagrass Conservation and Management Plan has been developed.

In March 2007 the Department of Conservation Services initiated a long-term **Seagrass Monitoring Programme**—the primary objective of the Bermuda Seagrass Conservation and Management Plan.

The sites include some that are likely to be impacted by recreational boating and cruise ships, sewage, and surface runoff from farms or golf courses (especially fertilizers). Through these regular surveys, managers can detect and respond to changes and identify factors causing changes quickly and effectively.

References

- Murdoch et al. 2007. Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser. 339: 123-130.
- Orth et al. 2006. Bioscience 56: 987-996

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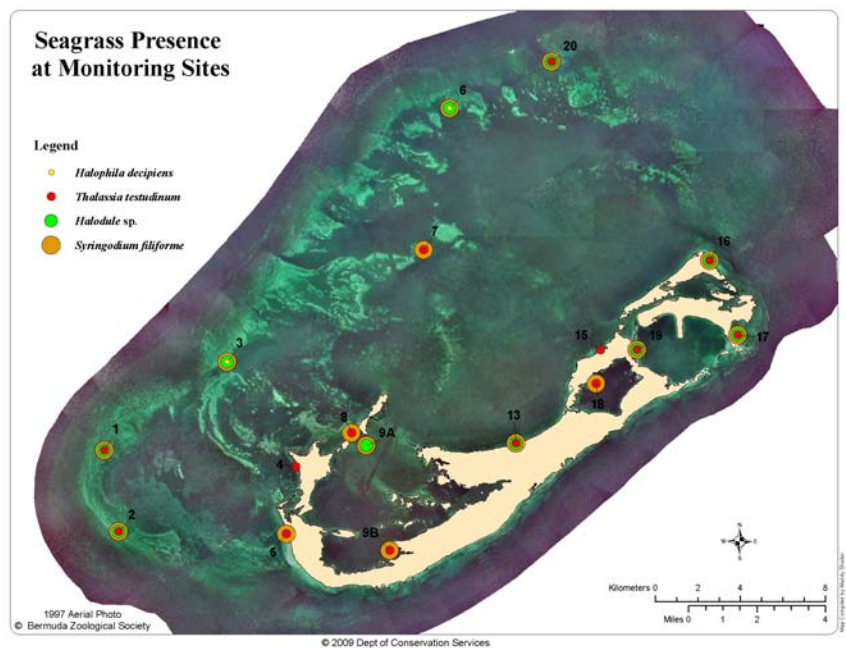
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The Seagrass Monitoring Programme provides regular, quarterly, health-checks of seagrass habitat at 17 sites.



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Public Works
Department of Conservation Services