

An underwater photograph showing a dense field of green seagrass, likely eelgrass, with long, thin blades swaying in the water. The background is a deep, dark green, suggesting a shallow, clear water environment.

EEL GRASS

Who wants to live *here*???

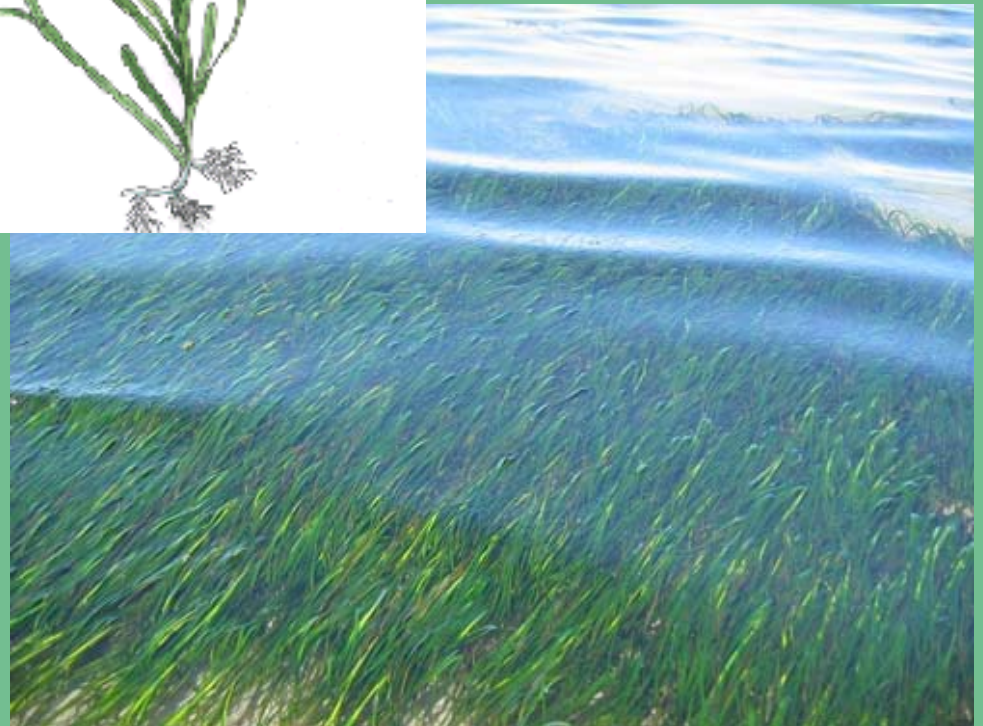
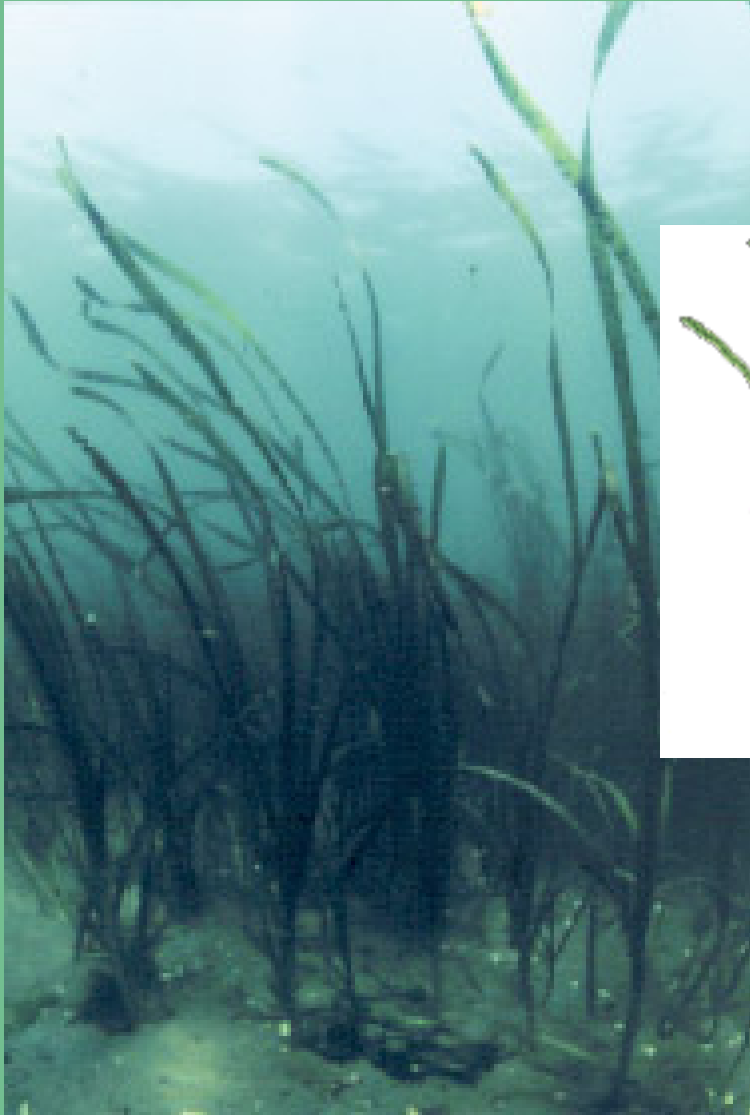
Eel grass is key to ocean survival.



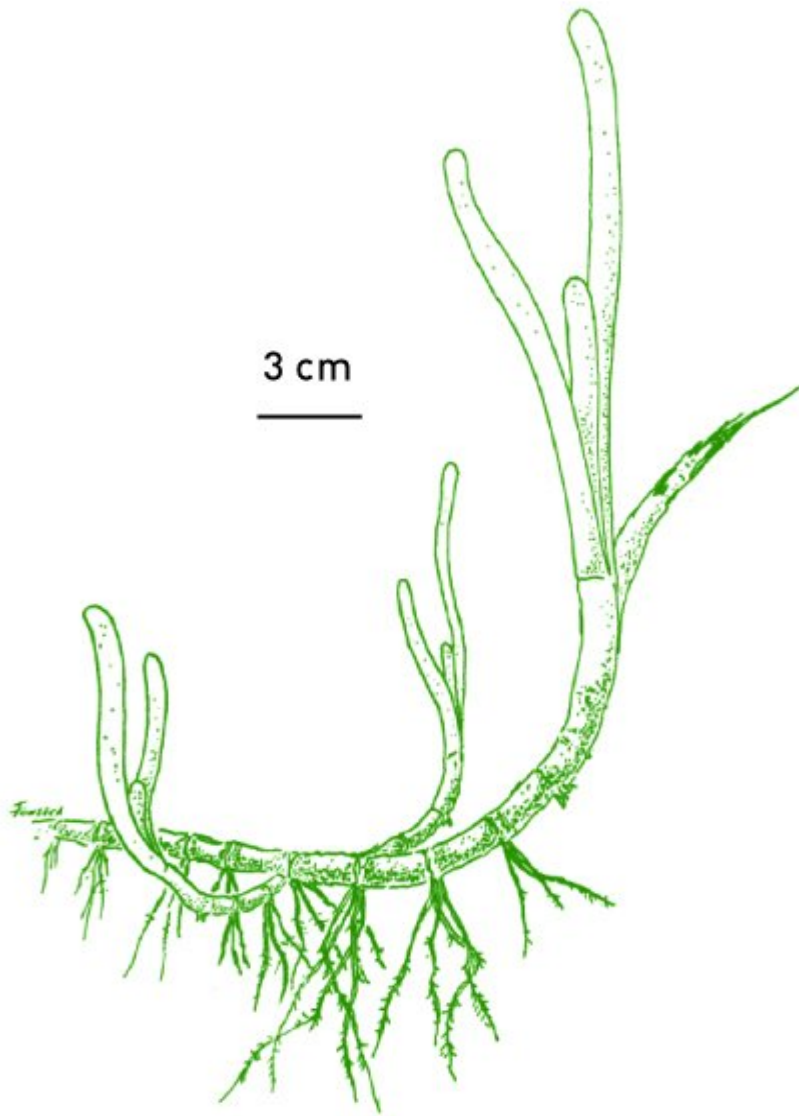


It is an important marine ecosystem.

Eel grass is not a seaweed



Zostera marina



Eel grass:

- is an underwater grass;
- blooms and spreads by seed, rhizomes or roots;
- forms beds or meadows that grow in spring and summer and decay in fall and winter;
- can grow up to 3 feet long;
- grows in shallow subtidal zone in estuaries; and
- likes muddy, sandy bottoms.



So who lives here anyway??



What's that?? Epiphytes

Brooding Anemones



Stalked Jellyfish

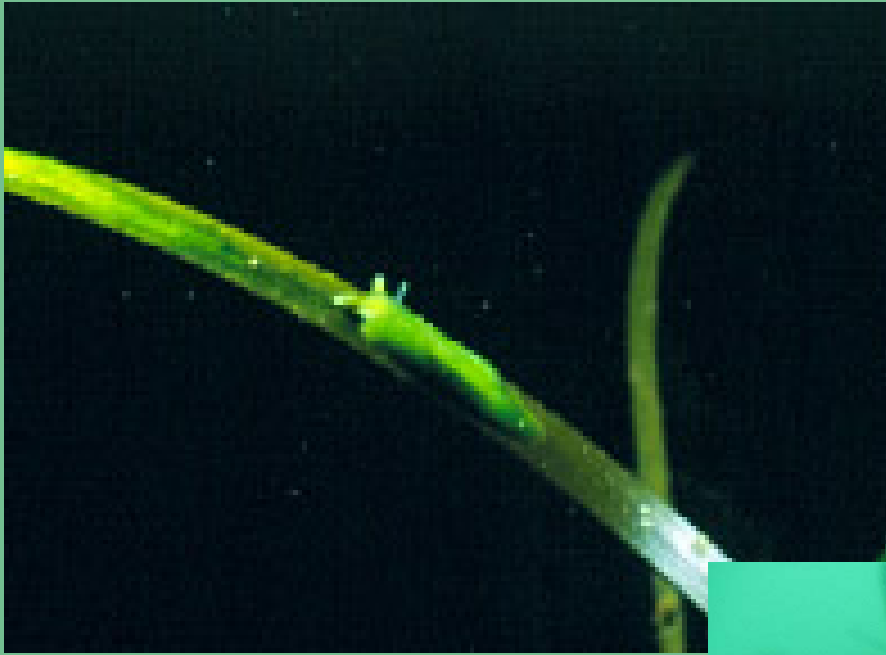




Giant Sea Cucumbers



Nudibranchs



Sea hares

Hooded Nudibranchs



Shrimp





Kelp Crabs



Red Rock Crabs





Sea Stars





Moon Snails

Snails



Gunnels





Opal Squid

Pipefish



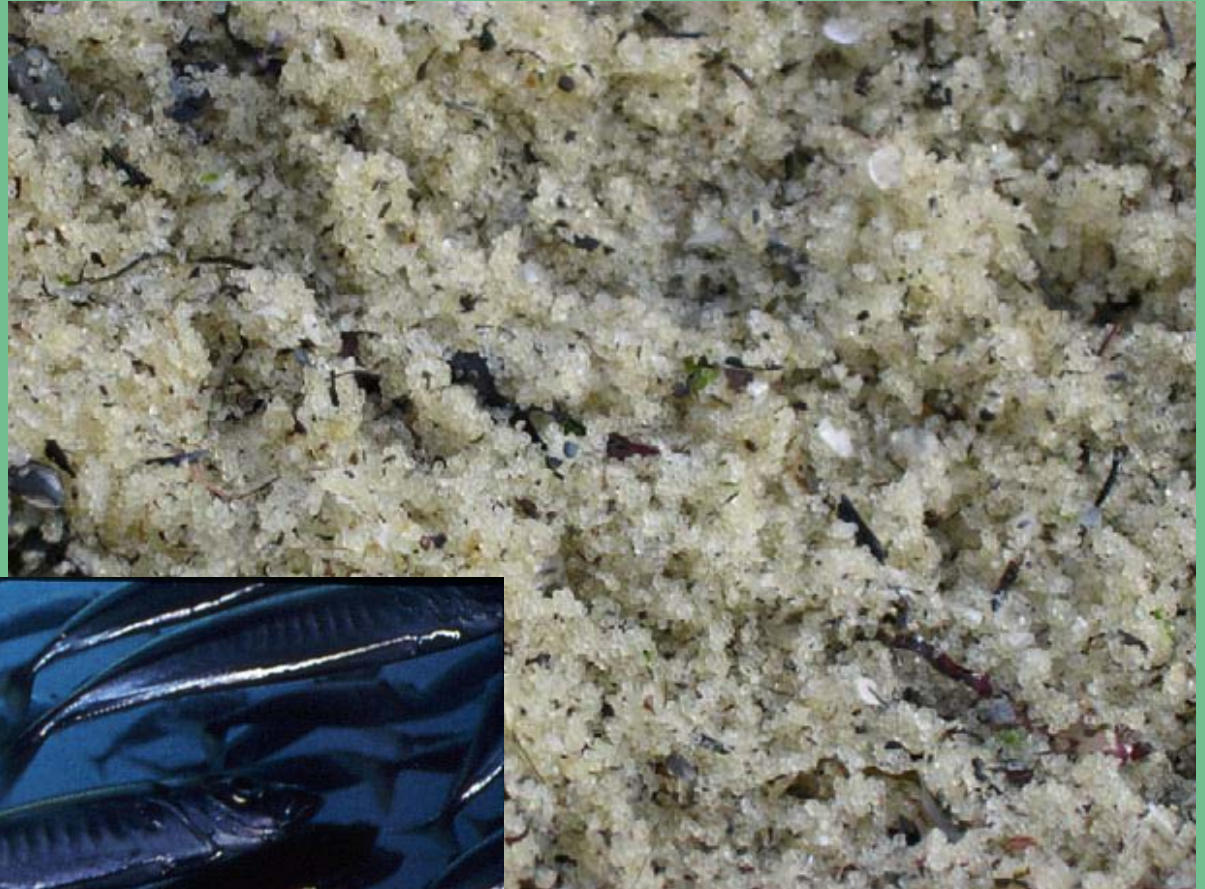


Rockfish

Sticklebacks



Herring

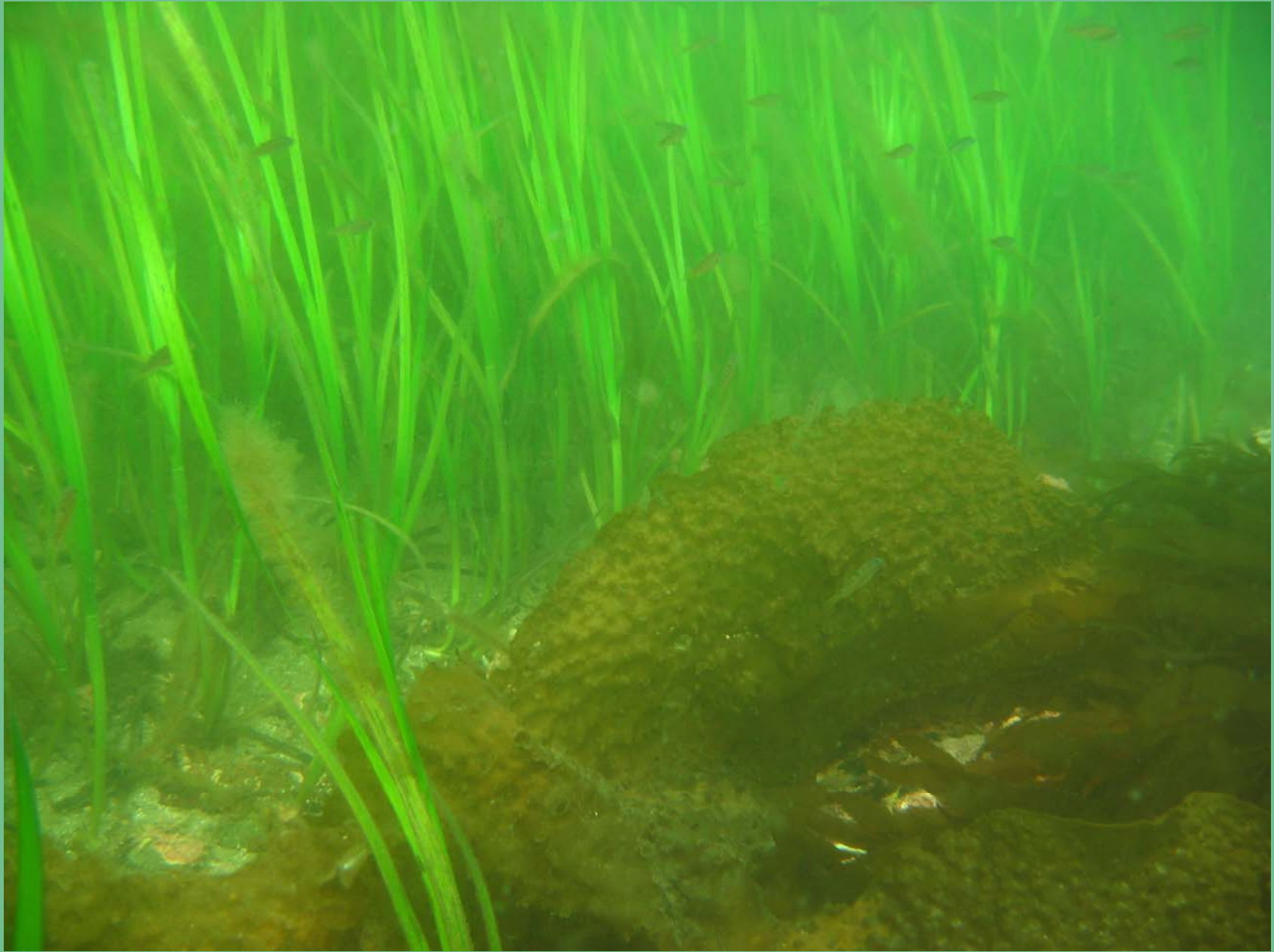




Young Salmon



**And even
more fish!**





Plankton

Eelgrass shoots are a food factory. Decaying plant and animal matter gathers on eelgrass leaves and provides food for many invertebrates: isopods, amphipods, polychaete worms, brittle stars, and some clams.

This makes eelgrass beds rich feeding areas for fish and marine birds.

As eelgrass dies, bacteria and fungi feed on the dead leaves, breaking them down into tiny bits. These particles of plant material provide vital nutrients for the food web.

Where did it go?





How can we help?? Eel grass transplants.







Low tide monitoring



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EELGRASS

~a central part of intertidal food webs~



SALMON, other FISH and BIRDS are food for large mammals like BEARS or HUMANS!



Eelgrass meadows form shelter for spawning HERRING.

HERRING are food for SALMON, BIRDS, SEALS, and other large mammals.

ALGAE grows on eelgrass blades. This provides food for small invertebrates called AMPHIPODS.



WORMS, CLAMS and SEA STARS are eaten by larger FISH, CRABS and BIRDS.



When eelgrass dies, it forms DETRITUS. Many animals such as WORMS, CLAMS, and SEA STARS feed on detritus.



BIRDS, SNAILS and SEA URCHINS like to eat the blades of eelgrass plants.

