



## SOUTH COAST CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Protecting and Restoring at Risk Species and Ecological Communities on BC's South Coast

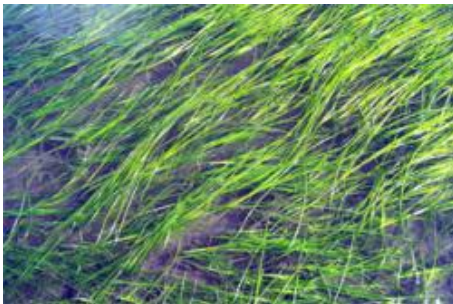
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### Eelgrass

An integral part of South Coast estuaries, bays and inlets, eelgrass communities are one of the most productive and vulnerable ecological communities of BC's Salish Sea. Eelgrass "meadows" function like biodiverse aquatic pastures, nurseries and refuges for a range of species, as well as foraging grounds for numerous resident and migratory waterbirds.



Eelgrass Bed Dept. of Ecology WA  
State



Eelgrass Bed NOAA



Eelgrass Mudflat WA State Dept. of  
Natural Resources



Eelgrass Menchi Wikipedia

## **Characteristics**

Eelgrass is often mistaken for a seaweed, but it is actually a flowering aquatic plant which has evolved to colonize the marine environment. The combination of fresh and salt water, sediment, light and organisms interact to form a unique and biodiverse system. It is estimated that over 80 percent of commercial fish and shellfish species depend on eelgrass habitat at some point in their lifecycle. On the South Coast the Fraser Estuary, Robert's Bank, Sturgeon Bank and Boundary Bay support one of the most extensive and contiguous eelgrass communities globally. Industrial, residential and recreational development and activities continue to put eelgrass communities under pressure and have resulted in the loss of a number of historic eelgrass communities, especially in places like Vancouver Harbour. Eelgrass beds also assist in coastal protection by supplying a physical barrier and reducing coastline erosion. Restoration of eelgrass communities is underway in Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound.

## **Resources**

**[Biodiversity in Greater Vancouver - Estuary Ecosystems](#)**

**For further information see**

**[Sea Change Marine Conservation Society](#)**

**[Living Oceans Society](#)**

**[Eelgrass Management Practices - Stewardship Centre of BC](#)**

**[The Pacific WildLife Foundation](#)**

**[Seagrass Conservation Working Group](#)**

**[Eelgrass Bed Mapping - Community Mapping Network](#)**

**[Eelgrass \(\*Zostera marina\* L.\) Restoration in the Pacific Northwest: Recommendations to Improve Project Success](#)**

**[Institute for Applied Ecology Estuary Technical Group.](#)**

**[Canadian Important Bird Areas](#)**

**[Islands Trust Fund Nearshore Eelgrass Habitat Mapping](#)**

The Islands Trust Fund is mapping nearshore eelgrass habitat in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound, in partnership with SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, the Mayne Island Conservancy Society and the Seagrass Conservation Working Group.

**[BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: Species and Ecosystems Search](#)**

A source for authoritative conservation information on thousands of plants and animals and hundreds of ecological communities in BC. From here connect to all provincial and federal recovery plans (including the SARA Registry), COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), Identified Wildlife guidance and conservation requirements for specific species and ecological communities of conservation concern impacted by forestry activities) and links to E-Flora and E-Fauna (the Electronic

### **British Columbia's Coast Region Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern**

A joint venture resource providing comprehensive information on a range of species and ecological communities specific to the Coast Region of BC (including the South, Central and North Coast, Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii).

### **Develop With Care Guidelines (see Lower Mainland Region section)**

Environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development in BC.

### **Species at Risk & Local Governments a Primer for BC**

Learn what species are at risk in your area, search by name, habitat type, regional district and forest district.

### **E-Flora the electronic atlas of the Flora of BC**

A volunteer-driven GIS-based biogeoclimatic atlas of the vascular plants, fungi, algae, bryophytes and lichens of BC.

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**Source URL:** <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/eelgrass>

#### **Links**

- [1] <http://www.seachangesociety.com>
- [2] <http://www.livingoceans.org/>
- [3] <http://www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca/static/eelgrass/eelgrassrestoration.html>
- [4] <http://www.pwlf.org/index.htm>
- [5] <http://www.seagrassconservation.org>
- [6] [http://cmnbc.ca/atlas\\_gallery/eelgrass-bed-mapping](http://cmnbc.ca/atlas_gallery/eelgrass-bed-mapping)
- [7] <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Research/Reports/700/706.1.htm>
- [8] <http://appliedeco.org/estuary>
- [9] <http://www.ibacanada.com/site.jsp?siteID=BC017&lang=EN>
- [10] <http://tinyurl.com/ahpneeo>
- [11] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>
- [12] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>
- [13] [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop\\_with\\_care\\_intro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro.html)
- [14] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>