

OUR MISSION AND VISION

VISION: FUTURE REALITY

We give seagrass meadows a voice. We are committed to making seagrass meadows into marine protected areas.

MISSION: IMPLEMENTATION

We develop diverse solutions to protect this unique marine ecosystem

WHO WE ARE ...

We are a diverse group of young people from the initiative Waves of Action of the Okeanos Foundation from Darmstadt, Germany. We were sailing in the bay of Saint Tropez when a change in weather forced us to anchor in the bay for protection. Here, we noticed that during this stressful situation many yachts had naively dropped their anchors, tearing out large amounts of seagrass. The shock that people care more about protecting their sailing boats than the integrity of the seagrass meadows never left us. We decided to act. Our approach to protecting the seagrass meadows is based on three pillars: First, we focus on **education**, such as with this booklet. Second, we aim to **develop sustainable alternatives** to commercial boat tourism. Third, we want to **create actions** by collaborating with other NGOs, such as setting up collection points for seagrass roots. We want to build a global community that exchanges ideas, learns from each other, is active and develops creative projects. Only together we can give seagrass meadows a strong voice and ensure their continued existence – for our oceans, our climate and our future. We are ready to make waves!

BIODIVERSITY

In an area of just 4,000 square metres, seagrass meadows offer shelter and food to 40,000 fish and around 50 million invertebrates. They also serve as breeding and nursery grounds for numerous fish species, and the dense vegetation offers young animals protection from predators and ideal conditions for growing up. **Seagrass meadows'** importance is particularly significant for endangered species such as the green sea turtle, for whom seagrasses are the main food source. **These underwater oases** have the ability to absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide during the day and help to mitigate the effects of climate change. They also provide a habitat for countless microorganisms. Together they form a complex ecosystem that is indispensable for the health and stability of the oceans. Thanks to their roots and rhizomes, seagrass meadows erosion of coastal sand and stabilise the seabed.

DEAR SAILORS

Seagrass does not provide adequate security for vessels, and anchoring in these areas can lead to various risks, including collisions with other boats and running aground on rocks.

Despite legal bans and penalties, anchoring continues in seagrass meadows, resulting in significant damage to these sensitive ecosystems. It is recommended that boaters use buoy fields for anchoring, and if these are not available, they should look for dark patches in the water indicating seagrass meadows.

If no seagrass beds are visible or a safe distance is maintained, anchoring is usually not a problem. However, caution must be exercised when hauling in the anchor to avoid causing any damage to the seagrass meadows.

In situations where visibility is poor or at night, observation alone is not sufficient. The **Donia app** can provide valuable assistance by checking for the presence of seagrass meadows before anchoring and suggesting alternative locations to protect these fragile ecosystems.

Get involved in protecting seagrass meadows!

SEAGRASS MEADOWS

The lungs of the ocean



SEAGRASS GUARDS

A PROJECT BY:

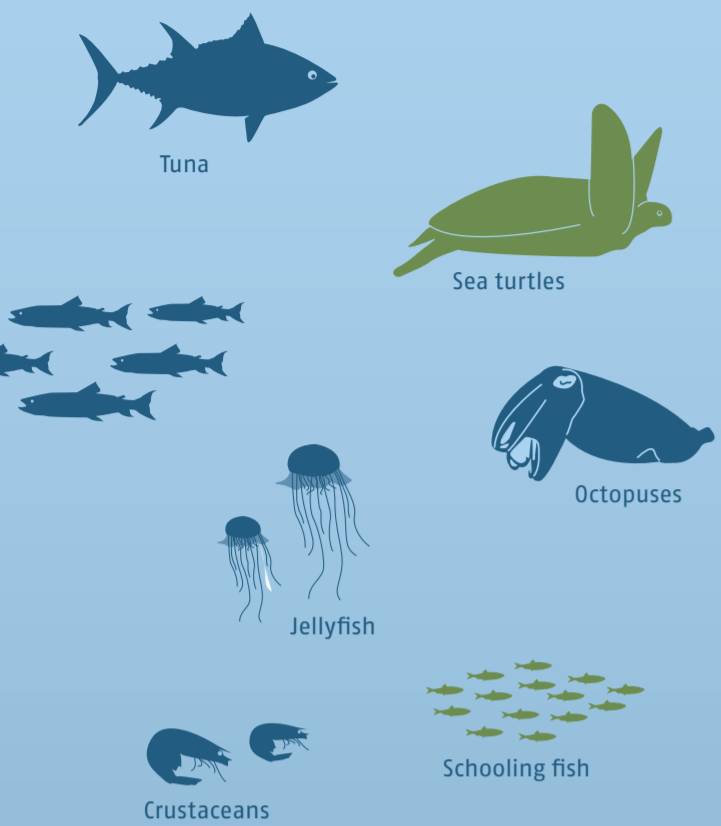


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MORE INFO:

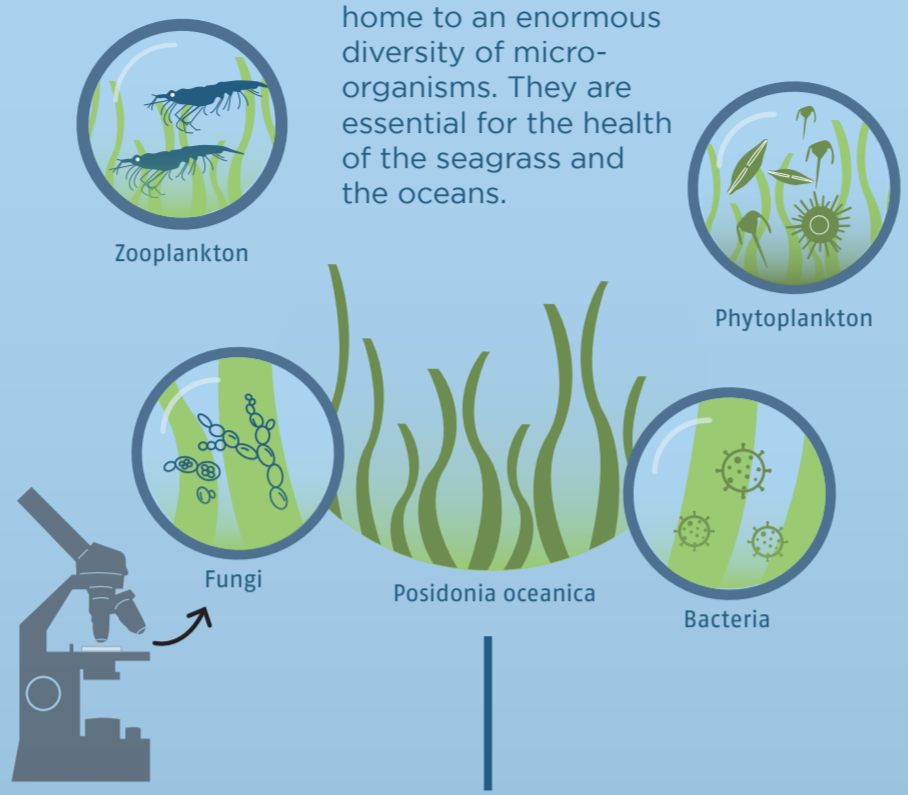


WHAT BENEFITS DO SEAGRASS MEADOWS PROVIDE?

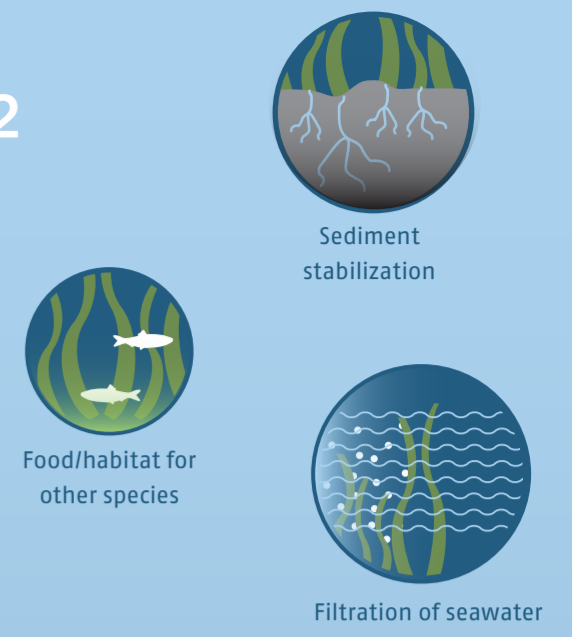


HABITAT
Seagrass meadows are important ecosystems. They provide habitat and food for countless marine life including fish, invertebrates and endangered species such as the green sea turtle.

BIODIVERSITY
Seagrass meadows are home to an enormous diversity of micro-organisms. They are essential for the health of the seagrass and the oceans.

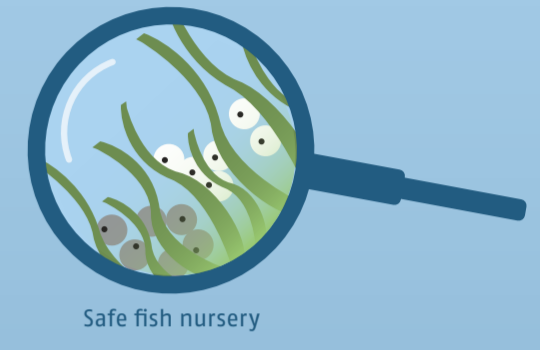


CO₂ x 2
1 m² of seagrass can bind twice as much CO₂ as 1 m² of rainforest.



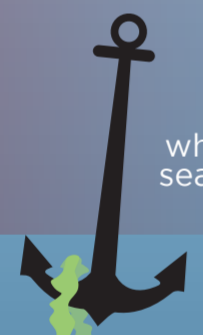
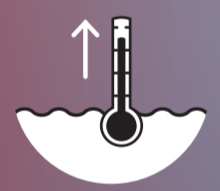
ECOSYSTEM FUNCTIONS

Seagrass meadows stabilize the sediment, reduce coastal erosion, filter pollutants, reduce acidity, store carbon and thereby making an important contribution to climate protection.

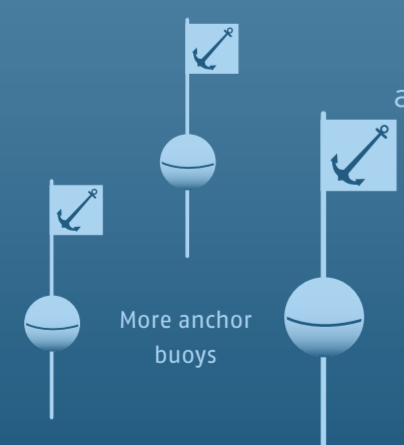


SEAGRASS IS THREATENED BY...

- Invasive species such as the tropical algae *Caulerpa taxifolia*
- Climate change and rising water temperatures
- Uprooting when anchoring in seagrass meadows



HELP SEAGRASS MEADOWS!



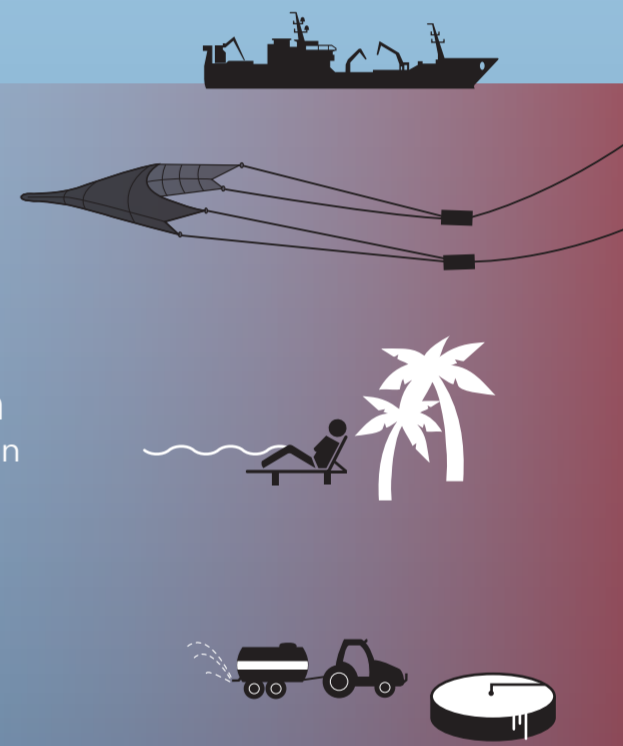
Expansion of anchor buoys in bays:
Instead of dropping anchors themselves, sailing boats can moor at permanently installed anchor buoys. Port associations can expand anchor buoys.



Educate:
Share knowledge about the threat and protection of seagrass meadows



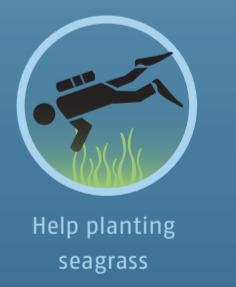
- Destruction e.g. by bottom trawling
- Destruction e.g. for tourism in bathing bays
- Pollution e.g. pesticides or wastewater



Get involved!



Use drop-off points for seagrass roots



SEAGRASS MEADOWS

The lungs of the ocean

MORE INFOS:
Instagram: @seagrass_guards.eu
Infographics: Esther Gonstalla
Sources:

