

Halophila seagrass

Halophila stipulacea

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Pathway • Natural spread - fragments dispersed naturally via currents and/or storms

- Ballast water
- Fishing

Impacts



Biodiversity

Induces changes to sublittoral communities by competing with native seagrasses for light and nutrients, and potentially physically displacing them by monopolizing space.

Can alter juvenile fish assemblages associated with native seagrass in the Caribbean habitat by reducing family level diversity.



Human health

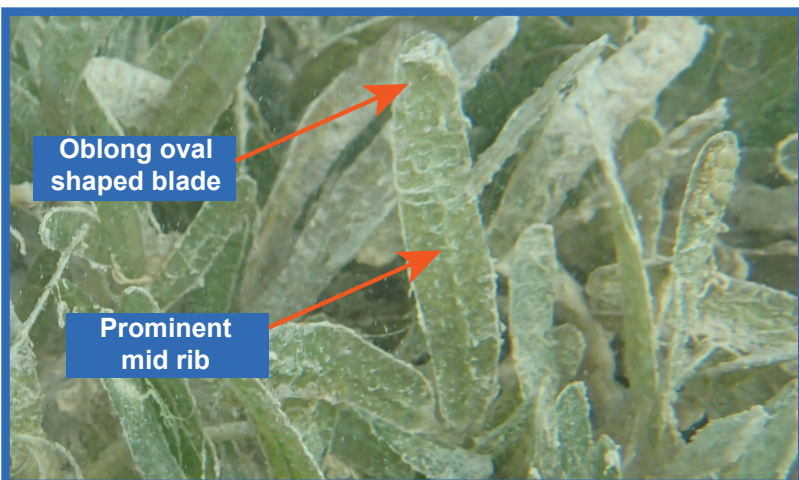
None known



Economy

None known

Key ID features



Description

Rhizomes (plant stems) are creeping, branched and fleshy. Roots appear solitary at each node of the rhizome, unbranched and thick with dense soft root hairs. Two short stems branch out from the rhizome, each carrying two leaf blades.

The base of the blade is covered by folded petioles (stalk that attaches the leaf to the stem) which are 2 - 10mm wide and 6 - 18mm long. Blades are an oblong oval shape with a prominent mid rib. Blade margins are serrated, and small hairs may be present on the leaf surface.

Displays high morphological and genetic variability to differing environmental and ecological factors. Plants have separate male and female flowers produced at each leaf node.

Size

Leaf blades 2 - 6 cm in length and 0.3 - 0.8 cm in width.

Colour

Pale - dark green.

*Note: Images not to scale



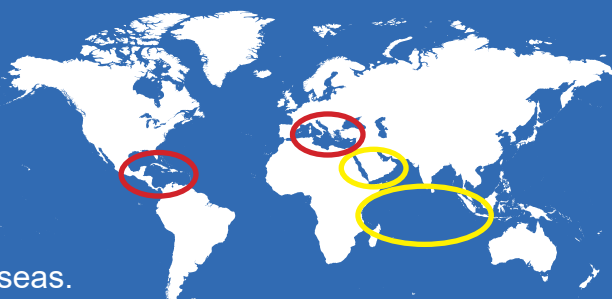
Distribution



Native range: Tropical and subtropical waters of the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.



Non-native range: Mediterranean and Caribbean seas.



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Habitat and ecology

Habitat: Sheltered sublittoral sand, mud flats, intertidal zone, estuaries, lagoons and coral reefs. Occurs at a range of depths, usually found between 30 - 45 m near harbours.

Environmental preferences: Tolerates a wide range of physiological conditions including water temperatures, light intensities, nutrient levels and salinities.

Reproduction: Both sexual and asexual, which can occur from fragments dispersing in currents and taking root. Rapid growth rates.

Confusion with similar species

Prominent midrib distinguishes it from *Caulerpa prolifera* (see below).



If you think you have seen this species, please contact the person below who will confirm its identity.

Please also refer to the mitigation strategies guidance document, provided as part of the Marine Biosecurity Toolkit.

Further reading

- <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/114669>
- <http://www.iucngisd.org/gisd/species.php?sc=1583>
- https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/guide_on_monitoring_invasive_species_in_amp.pdf

Images

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