

Marine Plants – Eelgrass

description

Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) is a type of marine plant known as seagrass, which, unlike seaweed, contains a vascular system that transports liquid and nutrients. Eelgrass beds are important for sediment deposition, substrate stabilization, and as substrate for epiphytic algae and micro-invertebrates. (Substrates include rocks, plants, animals, boat bottoms, piers, debris and, less frequently, sand and mud.) Eelgrass beds are also nursery grounds for many species of economically important fish and shellfish. Eelgrass often forms beds in bay mud in the estuarine setting and is an important food source for marine birds.

According to the Seagrass Conservation Working Group, eelgrass grows in areas with gravel, cobble, and boulders in British Columbia. It is much more common to find eelgrass in soft substrate (sand and mud) in areas south of Campbell River, while North of Campbell River it is more common to find eelgrass in areas with rock.

This atlas page illustrates eelgrass polygons from a variety of sources and time periods. Eelgrass presence has been symbolized based on the decade during which the surveys took place. Please note that at the time of publication, more recent eelgrass data are now available from the Community Mapping Network and the Seagrass Conservation Working Group.



PHOTO: A COTTON PHOTO

data sources

- Community Mapping Network (CMN) – Eelgrass Surveys
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Eelgrass Surveys
- Living Oceans Society – Merged Eelgrass Datasets
- Parks Canada – Haida Gwaii Marine Plants; Pacific Rim Confidence Weighted Abundance Rasters
- Province of British Columbia – Eelgrass Surveys

data resolution

- Because of the poor registration and differences in coastline this data should be considered accurate only to a scale of 1:40,000.

date collected

- 1890–2008

date compiled

- 2009

reviewers

- Ramona de Graaf, Huu-ay-aht Bamfield Eelgrass Stewardship Project
- Cynthia Durance, Precision Identification
- Brad Mason, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Community Mapping Network

reviewer comments

- Eelgrass along the north side of Barkley Sound that originates from the Haegel surveys is over-represented, and observations from 2002 do not show nearly as much eelgrass coverage.
- All available data is important, and historical presence is as important as current data.
- There is so little data that it should all be used.
- All data should be used which is indicative of presence except for the shorezone data set, which needs special interpretation.
- There is a high ecological value with relatively low occurrence along the shoreline.
- Eelgrass is only found in littoral areas.

caveats of use

- Survey effort is not consistent across all planning units or across all areas of the coast and some species tend to be under-represented by some survey methods. Areas with no data may not have been surveyed and these data gaps are not necessarily indicative of an absence of eelgrass. Some locations may still be important but currently lack associated data to confirm their value.
- This feature is a compilation of data collected by many people, for different purposes, using different survey techniques with different methodologies within each technique and, therefore, considerable care must be taken when using the data. Please refer to the original metadata document for data limitations and usage.
- Please also note that because data for all years was retained, the same eelgrass bed may be represented more than once if mapped in multiple years.
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: No expiry date.

map, feature data and metadata access

- Visit www.bcma.ca/data for more information.

BCMCA Atlas

Marine Plants

Eelgrass

Legend

Survey Decade

- 1890s
- 1940s
- 1950s
- 1960s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
- 2000s
- Uncertain

Note:
- Size of the eelgrass polygons has been exaggerated slightly to increase visibility at this scale.

Data Sources:

Community Mapping Network,
Fisheries and Oceans Canada,
Living Oceans Society, Parks Canada,
Province of British Columbia

Base Data:

ESRI Base Data, GeoBase, GeoBC,
NOAA, Natural Resources Canada,
USGS, Washington State Government

Thematic Data:

For more information on data sources
and methods please refer to the
facing page to this map

Projection: BC Albers NAD83

0 25 50 75 100 125 150

Kilometres

0 25 50 75

Nautical Miles

1:4,250,000 *

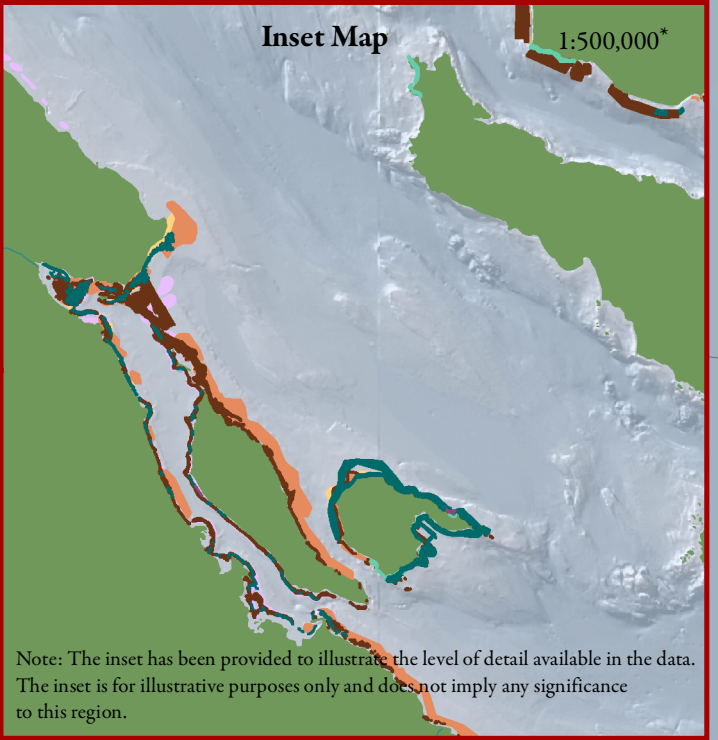
* Written scales are approximate and
are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.

June 2, 2010



Note: The inset has been provided to illustrate the level of detail available in the data. The inset is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply any significance to this region.