

# ④ The Seagrass Beds, an unpopular ecosystem!

Often unappreciated by tourists who see them only as "unsightly brown spots" in the turquoise blue of the lagoon, seagrass beds are remarkable ecosystems. These marine meadows are of great biological richness and provide a multitude of extremely valuable services for our well-being and security.

## A plant in the sea?

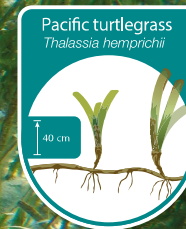
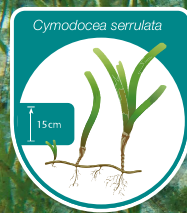
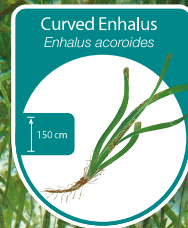
Contrary to what one might think, it is not algae that form seagrass beds, but rather marine plants. These differ from algae because they have roots, stems, leaves, and can even produce flowers...

## Seagrass beds, ecosystem engineers

Seagrass beds provide multiple ecological services, beneficial to marine biodiversity as well as to human populations.

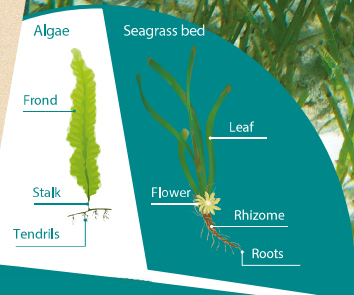
- ▶ They serve as a nursery, refuge, and food source for many emblematic species, including the green turtle.
- ▶ By filtering, assimilating, and storing nutrients and pollutants, they help to maintain water quality.
- ▶ They act as a barrier against waves, protecting coastal populations from flood and storm risks.
- ▶ As carbon sinks, they help to fight ocean acidification.

A trail for all, under everyone's responsibility.



## Seagrass beds in a few figures

936 km<sup>2</sup> of seagrass beds in New Caledonia  
 11 species of marine plants distributed among 6 genera  
 More than 60 species of fish  
 More than 23 species of echinoderms  
 And also, the dugong and green turtle.



To be continued

A diversity of species in a diversity of habitats!

But what habitats?



## Seagrass beds, a garden for our green turtles

Found in all oceans of the world, it is the most well-known of the sea turtle. Carnivorous in its youth, it becomes herbivorous and grazes on the marine plants of seagrass beds. It is also known for the "sunbathing" it takes on islets, which according to scientists, helps to compensate the lack of calcium and vitamin D in its diet...



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