

Citizen scientists needed for seagrass monitoring

MACKAY // 13 September 2021

If you have always wondered how you can get involved with citizen science, now's your chance to get out there and make a difference.

It's spring and volunteers are preparing to head out and monitor the region's seagrass meadows.

Every year, volunteers come together to collect citizen science data from five seagrass sites across our region. Whitsunday Seagrass Volunteers leads the program in the north and Mackay Seagrass Volunteers is led by Reef Catchments in the south.

Now, Reef Catchments is looking for volunteers for the upcoming surveys.

If you'd like to spend a few hours in our beautiful coastal environments collecting data on local seagrass communities, please contact Reef Catchments. No knowledge or experience is required to assist.

- Seagrass is the 5th most important ecosystem in the world
- One square metre of seagrass produces up to 10L of oxygen a day
- Seagrass meadows can replace all their leaves in just 10 days
- One hectare of seagrass can store approximately 1.2kg of nutrients per year. This is equivalent to the treated waste of 200 people
- Turtles and dugongs rely on seagrass for food

Twice a year, seagrass monitoring is conducted at Clairview and St Helens Beach in the Mackay/Isaac region. Each site is monitored for species diversity, biomass, and seagrass health indicators. Volunteers also frequently see dugong feeding trails, octopus, coral, and other exciting coastal inhabitants.

The data collected during seagrass monitoring is provided to [Seagrass Watch HQ](#) which appraises the information. Once data quality is assured, Seagrass Watch HQ analyses the data to make conclusions about the health of the seagrass. Following this, a grade is given to the seagrass. This grade is then included in the [Mackay Whitsunday Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership annual report card](#).

The next monitoring sessions will be held at St Helens Beach on Monday 4 October 2021, and at Clairview on Tuesday 5 October 2021.

Interested participants should contact Sally Stutsel for information on where and when to meet and what to bring.

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For more information, please contact Sally Stutsel on 0437 344 851 or sally.stutsel@reefcatchments.com