

# SEAGRASS

## ATTENTION: POWER BOAT OWNERS

NSW Maritime and Hornsby Shire Council have received several complaints from the local community regarding damage to seagrasses in the Hawkesbury River, Cowan Creek and Broken Bay area so we would like to spearhead an educational awareness program aimed at all water users to this area.

### SEAGRASS BEDS ARE SOMETIMES CALLED

#### “NURSERIES OF THE SEA”.

Seagrasses are a fragile habitat and are particularly important for fish populations, providing shelter and food critical to the survival of a wide variety of aquatic organisms. Many major estuaries in NSW have lost as much as 85% of their seagrass beds in the past 30 to 40 years. This loss may contribute to declines in the abundance and diversity of fish and invertebrates in some of these estuaries and nearby coastal zone as their recovery is slow.

The boating public can assist with the protection of seagrass in the following ways:

1. **Boating and anchoring:** where there is high risk of parts of vessels (e.g. propeller, keel, anchors) causing damage to seagrass in shallow water, the person in-charge of the vessel should avoid travelling in that area. All boats should avoid anchoring in seagrass areas and use the courtesy moorings provided.
2. **Pollution from vessels:** do not discharge any pollution such as sewage or contaminated bilge water in enclosed waters.

It is an offence under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 to cut, remove, damage or destroy marine vegetation on public water land or an aquaculture lease, or on the foreshore of any land or lease. Additionally it is an offence under the Protection of the Environment Operations Regulation 1999, to pollute waters.

*If anyone witnesses the damage to seagrass areas or pollution of our waterways, please contact NSW Maritime on 13 12 56, Department of Primary Industries 1800 043 536 or Hornsby Shire Council on 9847 6666.*

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[www.maritime.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au)