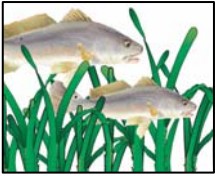


# Responsible Boating Protects Seagrasses



Seagrasses are true flowering plants that are adapted to living in marine waters. They are among the most productive communities in the world.

## HEALTHY SEAGRASS COMMUNITIES

- ⇒ Provide habitat/shelter for many species of marine life
- ⇒ Improve water quality by filtering nutrients
- ⇒ Stabilize bottom sediments and reduce erosion
- ⇒ Support a multi-billion dollar commercial and recreational fishing industry



## SEAGRASSES ARE THREATENED

- ⇒ Physical damage
- ⇒ Overdevelopment
- ⇒ Salinity stress
- ⇒ Temperature stress

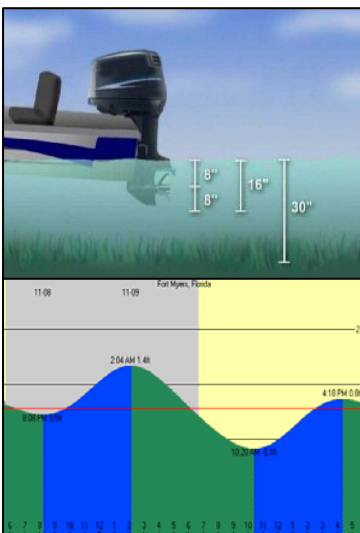
## SEAGRASSES AND BOATING

Careless boating practices can result in damage to seagrass beds such as prop scarring and blow outs. Damage may only take seconds to create, but seagrass recovery takes years, resulting in environmental and economic losses.



## HOW CAN BOATERS HELP?

- ⇒ Know your boat's draft on and off a plane
- ⇒ Stay in marked channels; troll or pole when out of channels
- ⇒ Familiarize yourself with local waters
- ⇒ Do you know where the seagrasses are in your area? Check the boater's guide
- ⇒ Check tides and weather conditions before going out
- ⇒ Wear polarized sunglasses to reduce glare on the water
- ⇒ Take a boating safety class
- ⇒ Use a push pole or trolling motor in shallow water



# RESPONSIBLE BOATING PROTECTS SEAGRASS

## REMEMBER THE RHYMES

**Brown, brown,** run aground. Avoid brown areas. The color indicates that reef formations or seagrass beds are close to the surface.

**White, white,** you just might. Use Caution. Sandbars and rubble areas may be much shallower than they appear.

**Green, green,** nice and clean. Green waters are generally safe for shallow draft boats; larger deeper draft vessels should exercise caution.

**Blue, blue,** cruise on through. Clear sailing in deep water areas.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU RUN AGROUND

- ⇒ STOP- Do not try and power off the bed
- ⇒ Turn OFF your motor
- ⇒ Trim your motor up
- ⇒ Push or pole your boat out the way you came in (or drift free)

*Don't be afraid to get out of the boat and PUSH.*



**The State of Florida has 8,400 miles of shoreline.**

**Each day thousands of boaters use our waterways for transportation, commercial or recreational fishing, swimming, skiing, diving or cruising.**

**Your participation and involvement will make a difference.**

More Information:

**Joy Hazell, Lee County Sea Grant**  
239-461-7518  
hazellje@leegov.com



The Extension Service is an off-campus branch of the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and department with the Public Services Division of Collier County Government. Extension programs are open to all persons without regard to race, color, creed, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. In compliance with ADA requirements, participants with special needs can be reasonably accommodated by contacting the Extension Service at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. Contact Extension at (239) 461-7500.