

GREEN SEAWEED CONTINUED



Deadman's Fingers, Oyster Thief, "Sputnik Weed" (*Codium fragile*) An invasive species from Europe, first spotted in the area in 1957, around the time the Soviets launched the Sputnik satellite. Attaches to hard objects, such as oysters, and becomes buoyant during very sunny days when the seaweed produces a lot of oxygen via photosynthesis that becomes trapped in the spongy tissues of the seaweed, causing the seaweed (and the oyster) to float away.

RED SEAWEED



Red Woolly Grass, Agardh's Red Weed (*Agardhiella subulata*) One of the most common seaweeds in Long Island Sound. A home to young scallops and part of a balanced diet for sand sharks. Excessive amounts may indicate nutrient pollution (see sea lettuce for a description of this problem).



Red Puff Balls (*Spermothamnion repens*) and other fine red seaweeds. Many different species of hair-like, "filamentous" red seaweeds are found along the seashore. Try placing in the water to get a better look. The one in this photo turns into a puff ball, but you may see feather-like structures, fuzzy chenille, tiny hooks, or delicate branches.



Irish Moss (*Chondrus crispus*) Color may be purple, red, brown or black; bleaches to beige in the sun. Harvested for carrageenan which is used as a thickening agent in a variety of products including ice cream and toothpaste. Good habitat for blackfish (tautog). Ingredient in blanc mange pudding.



NIANTIC BEACHES LIVING ECOSYSTEM PROJECT SEAWEEDS OF Niantic



This project is sponsored by the Foundation, in cooperation with the East Lyme Parks and Recreation Department, as a public education service. Funding provided as a grant awarded by the UConn Sea Grant.

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SEAGRASS / EELGRASS



Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) is a true plant, like the grass growing on your lawn, but specialized to live its whole life underwater. Eelgrass is known as the “whale of the plant world”. All plants started as tiny ocean organisms which eventually moved on to land. Like the whale, a descendant of a land mammal that returned to the ocean, this plant also returned to the ocean. Today, seagrass provides habitat for many animals including fish, shellfish, and crabs. Many of the dark spots you see in the Bay are seagrass beds. These are a great place to fish and snorkel and a great sign of excellent water quality.

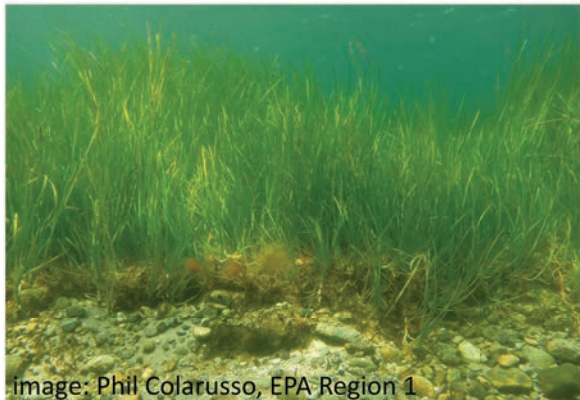


Image: Phil Colarusso, EPA Region 1

BROWN SEAWEED WITH HOLDFASTS

These brown seaweeds, like eelgrass, are indicators of good water quality. All three have holdfasts, root-like structures that grab onto rocks and hold the seaweed in place. The rockweeds are intertidal, attached to rocks exposed at low tide, and are home to many animals. Long Island Sound hosts a few species of kelp, seaweeds which live completely underwater; kelp on the beach has been torn free from its rocky habitat in deeper water.



Rockweed, Poppers (*Fucus vesiculosus*)

Note the rib down the middle of the stipe (stem) and presence of paired air bladders along the stipe. A similar species of **Rockweed** (*Fucus spiralis*) lacks the paired air bladders. The bumps on the floats located at the tip of the seaweed are reproductive structures where spores are produced.



Rockweed, Bladder Wrack (*Ascophyllum nodosum*)

Note the absence of the rib down the middle of the stipe. Many live to be 20 to several hundred years old, earning the common name “Old Man of the Sea.”



Kelp, Sugar Kelp (*Saccharina latissima*)

Found year round on the beach, but the whole plants are more common in colder months when this seaweed is growing well (fall, winter, spring). Currently farmed in Long Island Sound as a food source.

GREEN SEAWEED



Sea Lettuce (*Ulva* species, blade form) Many species of sea lettuce are now found in Long Island Sound, some native and some invasive. May grow to 3 feet. All species look very similar; to identify a species, you need to do a genetic test. This is an “indicator species” for environmental problems - if you see a lot of sea lettuce, nutrient pollution is likely: nitrogen and phosphorus from septic and sewer discharges, fertilizer use, and storm water runoff contribute to water quality problems. While this nutrient pollution is not directly dangerous to humans, it can lead to loss of fisheries and degradation of the place you are enjoying right now.



Gut Weed (*Ulva intestinalis*)

Found in the intertidal and shallow water zone attached to rocks. The fronds are tubular (like intestines) and filled with gas, helping the tubes stay erect in the water.