

# The Bottom Is Alive!

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- ❖ Seagrasses are flowering plants that live underwater.
- ❖ There are 7 species of seagrasses in Florida. Turtle grass, manatee grass, and shoal grass are the most common types.
- ❖ Seagrasses serve other important functions, such as:
  - helping maintain water clarity by trapping sediments
  - stabilizing the bottom with their roots (rhizomes)
  - serving as food to many marine animals.
- ❖ Species diversity of seagrass communities can range from 292 individuals to 10,644 per square meter.
- ❖ Seagrass communities are an integral component of the web connecting shallow water habitats that link wetland and mangrove communities to hardbottom and coral reefs. Damaging one habitat has severe consequences on the others.
- ❖ Seagrass species are critical for stabilizing sediments and providing a system that comprises hundreds or thousands of associated plant and animal species. Without seagrasses many areas would be a seascape of unstable shifting sand and mud.
- ❖ Taking the time to look closely at a seagrass bed allows one to realize the complexity of the miniaturized living community that depends upon protection, shelter, and food from the seagrass meadow.