

MAJOR THREATS TO DUGONGS AND SEAGRASSES

- Harmful fishing practices:
 - Use of nets targeting bottom dwelling rays and sharks
 - Use of explosives
 - Bottom and mid-water trawling
- Hunting of dugongs
- Destruction of coastal and marine habitats
- Pollution of coastal and marine environments
- Alteration and destruction of sensitive coastal and marine habitats resulting from climate change

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Increase awareness on the importance of protecting seagrasses and dugongs
- Report harmful fishing practices to the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Police
- Reduce marine and coastal pollution
- Encourage less destructive fishing practices in your community

DUGONG AND SEAGRASS CONSERVATION PROJECT

This project is executed by the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, with financing from the GEF, implementation support by UNEP and technical support from the CMS Dugong MOU Secretariat.

To learn more visit <http://www.dugongconservation.org/>

OTHER LOCAL PROJECT PARTNERS:



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SAVE THE DUGONG

&

PROTECT THE SEAGRASS



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THE DUGONG

A dugong (*Dugong dugon*), commonly referred to as the sea cow, is a migratory marine mammal that feeds primarily on seagrasses. The dugong reaches sexual maturity at 10 years and has a slow development process. Females give birth every 3 to 7 years.

A fully grown dugong can weigh between 250 kg to 400 kg and grows to an average length of 3 m. They can hold their breath under water up to 6 minutes. The dugong relies on its highly specialized hearing to communicate at frequencies much below the human hearing range.

The continuation of destructive fishing practices due to inadequate law enforcement threatens the survival of the dugong. It is listed as vulnerable to extinction in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.



SEAGRASSES

Seagrasses are exclusively found in shallow marine waters and hence cover a very small area of the sea bed.



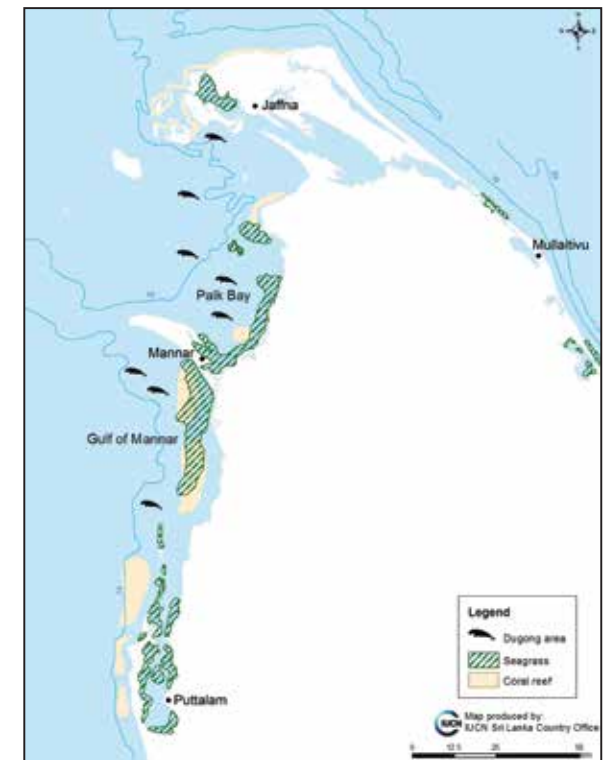
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WHY ARE SEAGRASSES IMPORTANT?

- They create suitable habitats for many species including fish, clams, shrimps and crabs by providing shelter, as well as feeding and nursery grounds and therefore contribute significantly to coastal fisheries
- Dugongs and sea turtles depend on seagrasses for their sustenance
- They trap sediment and improve clarity of sea water
- Seagrasses help in mitigating climate change by absorbing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere

DISTRIBUTION OF DUGONGS AND SEAGRASSES

The dugong is found in coastal waters ranging from East Africa to Vanuatu in the South Pacific Ocean. The largest recorded population is in northern Australia.



In Sri Lanka, dugongs and extensive seagrass meadows are found in the north and north-western coastal waters, specifically in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay. The dugong is protected under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance of Sri Lanka. The killing of a dugong and/or possession of its body parts is an offence and will result in a fine of up to Rs. 100,000 and/or imprisonment.