

Methods to measure eelgrass density and morphology

To document habitat complexity, we will measure eelgrass shoot density and length in quadrats placed every 5 meters along a randomly selected 50 meter transect. Shoot density will be counted along the transect in ten 0.25m² quadrats, and the total lengths of 3 shoots will be measured (in mm) from the top of the sheath to the tip of the longest leaf per quadrat (Figure 1).

- 1) Lay 50 m tape out in eelgrass bed. If the bed is shorter than 50 m, the tape can be curved to fit within the bed.
- 2) Place quadrat at the beginning point of the tape (0.0m). Clear leaves along the inner sides to be able to identify shoots that grow from within the quadrat. Only these shoots are counted. Leaves from shoots growing beyond quadrat boundaries are moved out of the way. Count the number of shoots within the quadrat and record number on the data sheet.
- 3) Select a shoot at random. Measure from the top of the sheath to the tip of the longest leaf and record this number in millimeters. Repeat two more times for a total of three randomly selected shoots.
- 4) Move a distance of 5 meters along the tape and repeat steps 2-3.

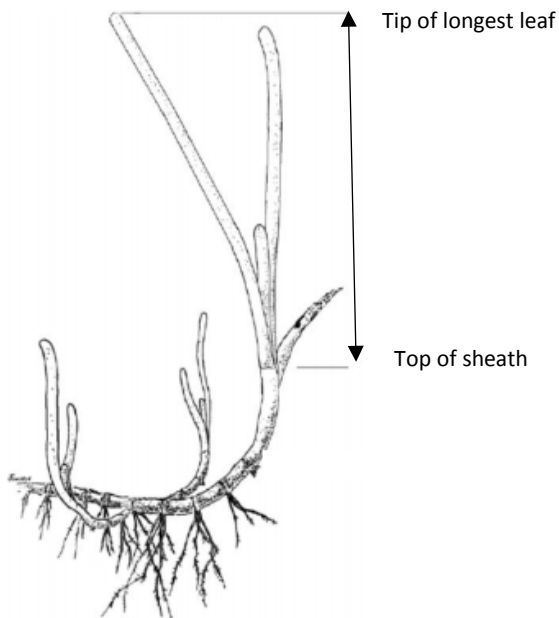


Figure 1 Eelgrass shoot indicating length from top of sheath to tip of longest leaf (original drawing from Fonseca 1998)

Eelgrass density and morphology data sheets

Site _____

Date _____

Observers _____

Quadrat number	Eelgrass shoot density
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Measured shoot #	Shoot length (mm)
1	
2	
3	