

Study: World's seagrass beds are declining

March 28 2006

A University of New Hampshire scientist says the world's seagrass beds -- important habitats, food sources and sediment stabilizers -- are disappearing.

Research Professor Frederick Short said as the shallow water seagrass ecosystems disappear, so do commercially valuable fish, waterfowl and other wildlife, as well as water quality and erosion prevention.

Short, founder of the global monitoring program SeagrassNet, collaborates with teams of researchers to monitor seagrass at 45 sites in 17 nations.

"Almost everywhere we start monitoring seagrass, it's declining," he says. And while conclusive global results are not yet available, Short says he is fairly certain the causes are consistent around the world: human impact.

For example, at a state park in Malaysia satellite imaging showed the disappearance of the seagrass beds was not due to a global force like climate change, but rather to on-shore logging that had increased the level of water-borne sediments.

Short and his SeagrassNet colleagues have not ruled out global climate change as a factor in the decline of seagrass beds. Yet, so far, he's found the affects on seagrass to be far more localized.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: Study: World's seagrass beds are declining (2006, March 28) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-03-world-seagrass-beds-declining.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.