

# Hat Island's Underwater Forests and Meadows:

Hat Island is home to floating kelp forests and eelgrass meadows, just off our shoreline!

## Under the waves around Hat Island, forests of towering bull kelp and meadows of flowering eelgrass thrive.

And just as forests and meadows do on land, kelp and eelgrass habitats provide many benefits to animals, marine ecosystems, and humans.

### Climate

Kelp and eelgrass help us respond to climate change. They both absorb and store carbon, helping to slow climate change, while also preventing erosion by cushioning the impact of waves.

### Community

When we lose kelp and eelgrass habitat, we lose the creatures who rely on it—including endangered orca, salmon, crab and shellfish. These species are culturally important to local tribal, recreational, and commercial communities. We're connected to kelp and eelgrass, whether we are making food, crabbing, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, diving, or simply enjoying the beauty of where we live.

### Habitat

As trees and meadows are home to squirrels, birds, and other animals, kelp and eelgrass provide a refuge for young salmon, herring, rockfish, shellfish, and other species.

### Water Quality

Marine vegetation helps reduce pollution in our water, keeping it clean and safe for humans and marine life.

#### SUBMERGED VEGETATION MONITORING PROGRAM SITES

 Eelgrass present in this area

 OBSERVED KELP SITE



In September 2024, 89 acres of bull kelp were observed around Hat Island—that's the same as 1/5 the size of Hat Island itself!

# Actions you can take...

Our local kelp and eelgrass habitat is considered a critical and protected area by the state, with the beds south of Hat Island part of Washington state's first Kelp and Eelgrass Protection Zone. Kelp beds are declining in central and south Puget Sound and our kelp beds in Possession Sound are just north of where these declines have occurred.

Kelp and eelgrass experience many different stressors, but fortunately there are actions we can all take at home and on the water to help give kelp the conditions it needs to survive! Clean water in the Sound starts with clean water on land.

## ...at home...



**Plant and maintain vegetation on slopes** to reduce runoff. Plants help soil absorb runoff and filter out pollutants before it reaches the Sound.



**Get your septic tank inspected and pumped** at regular intervals—faulty septic systems pollute groundwater and surface waters.



**Avoid using chemicals** to remove moss from roofs and weeds from lawns. The same chemicals that kill moss, weeds, and insects harm our kelp, eelgrass, and salmon.



**Pick up pet waste**—pet waste is one of the leading pollutants of our water.



## ...and on the water



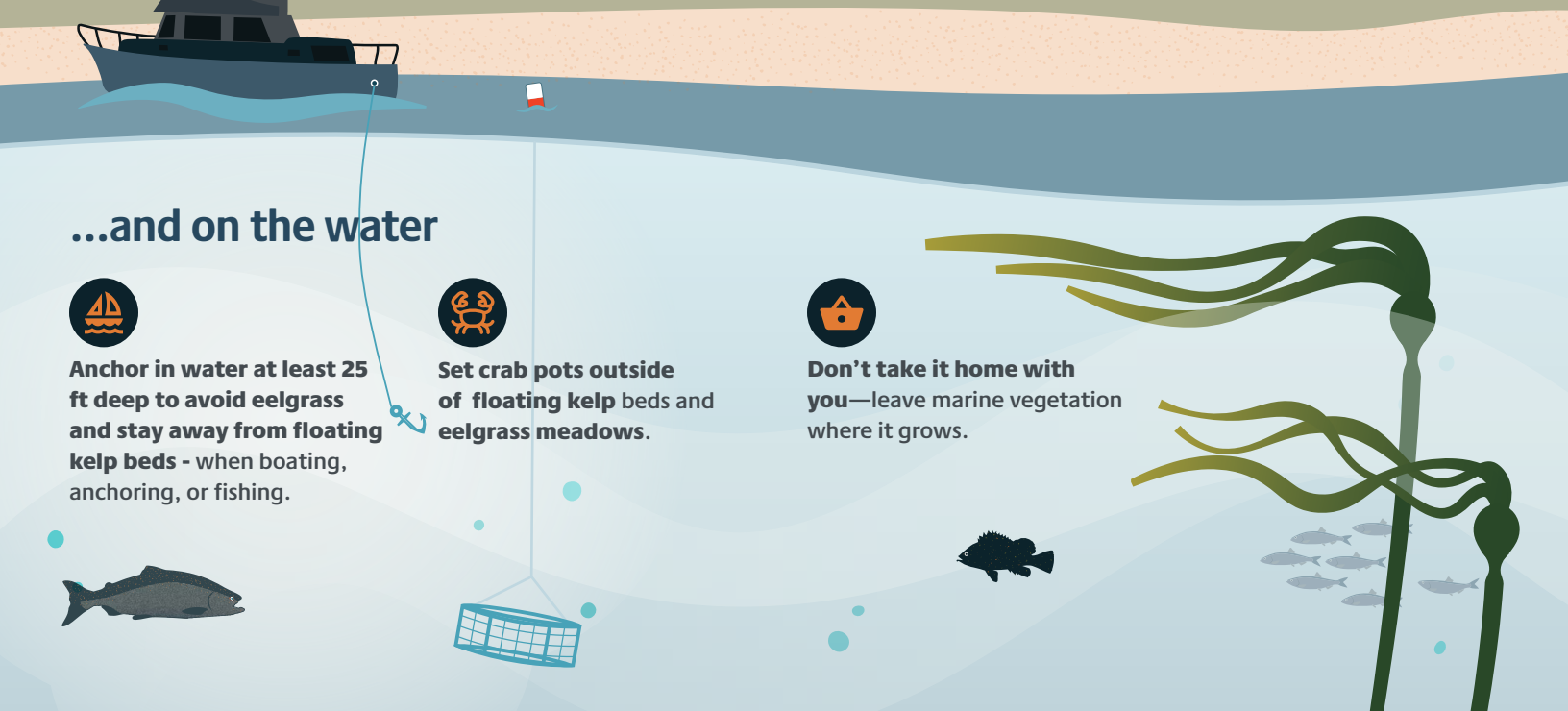
**Anchor in water at least 25 ft deep** to avoid eelgrass and stay away from floating kelp beds - when boating, anchoring, or fishing.



**Set crab pots outside of floating kelp beds and eelgrass meadows.**



**Don't take it home with you**—leave marine vegetation where it grows.



**Snohomish County**  
Marine Resources  
Committee



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