

# BOATING & SEAGRASS

## LIFT      DRIFT



## POLE      TROLL



Protecting seagrass is important for good fishing, and it's the law!



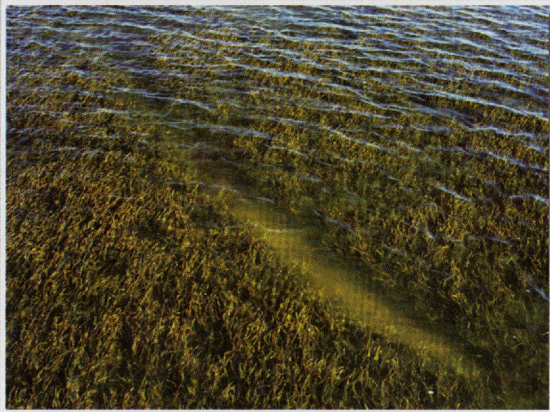
Roger Swiderski



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# PROPELLER SCARS

Propeller scars are created when careless boaters run through shallow seagrass beds, digging up sediment and seagrass roots with their boat propellers. Severe scars may take years to recover if at all.



The number and diversity of marine organisms have been shown to be lower in and around scars.

Extensive scarring reduces the ability of seagrass beds to withstand large-scale storm events.

Prop scarring reduces water clarity and prevents sunlight from reaching seagrasses.

Creating propeller scars is illegal in Texas.

# GOOD BOATING PRACTICES

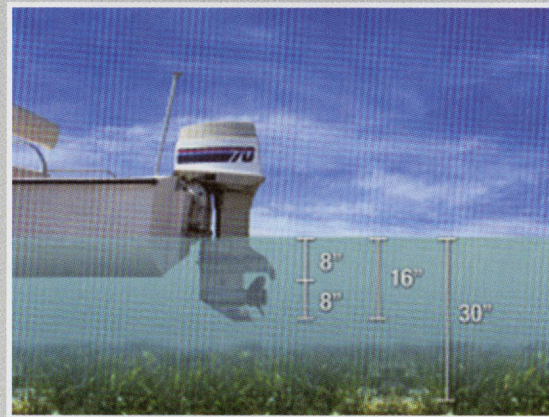
Boaters should exercise caution in shallow areas and follow these guidelines:

## SEEK INFORMATION

Before launching in unfamiliar areas, make use of maps and GPS chart plotters.

## CHECK THE TIDE

Check tide charts and visual indicators of tide height such as wading birds, exposed oysters, and shoals.



## KNOW YOUR BOAT

Know your boat's limitations for running and take-off depths. Seek advice on matching your boat and equipment with your fishing area.

## WATCH YOUR WAKE

Ensure boat wake is white, not brown. If it is brown, turn around.



## LIFT, DRIFT, POLE, or TROLL

When possible, avoid running your boat through shallow areas. When in shallow water, lift your motor and drift, pole, or troll.

## PLAN YOUR DRIFT

Consider wind speed and direction when setting up a drift. Use deeper water or existing channels as preferred access when possible.

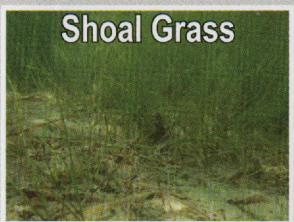
## RUN TO THE FLATS, NOT THROUGH THE FLATS.

# TEXAS' 5 SPECIES OF SEAGRASS



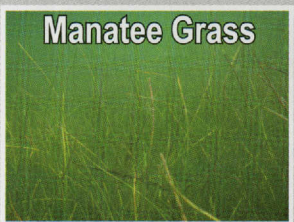
Turtle Grass

- Grazed on by sea turtles
- Wide, flat leaves
- Slow-growing
- Indicative of stable conditions



Shoal Grass

- Primary food source for redhead ducks
- Flat, narrow leaves with blunt tips
- Fast-growing



Manatee Grass

- Cylindrical leaves
- Slow-growing
- Indicative of stable conditions



Star Grass

- Elliptical leaves in palm pattern
- Small tropical species
- Can be obscured by other seagrasses

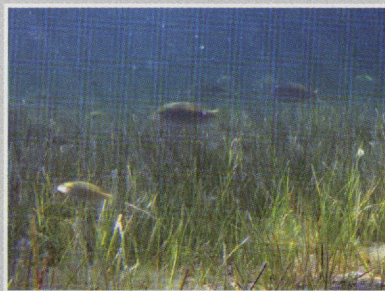


Widgeon Grass

- Flat, narrow leaves with pointed tips
- Can grow in fresh water

# SEAGRASS BENEFITS

- Improve water quality
- Provide nursery areas, food & shelter
- Cycle nutrients
- Stabilize sediments
- Oxygenate water and sediments
- Sequester carbon



Seagrasses are highly-specialized marine flowering plants that require sunlight to grow and are therefore restricted to shallow areas of the bay. Their extensive root structure stabilizes sediments, improving water clarity and reducing erosion. The leaves provide places to hide and a surface to which smaller plants and animals can attach. These smaller organisms provide food for fish and other animals. Like leaves on a tree, seagrass leaves fall off during the winter and regrow the following spring. The majority of seagrasses in Texas are found in the Laguna Madre, but all bay systems contain seagrasses.

For more information on seagrass, visit:  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seagrass/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/seagrass/)

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