

Invasive Algae Response



v2023

What Is Caulerpa?

Caulerpa is an invasive algae considered a “living pollutant” because it spreads quickly and has previously caused significant and expensive damage to coastal waters in California. This species group has also had extensive impacts elsewhere, including throughout the Mediterranean. Caulerpa can take over natural habitats, disrupting the ecosystem and displacing native plants and the animals that rely on them.

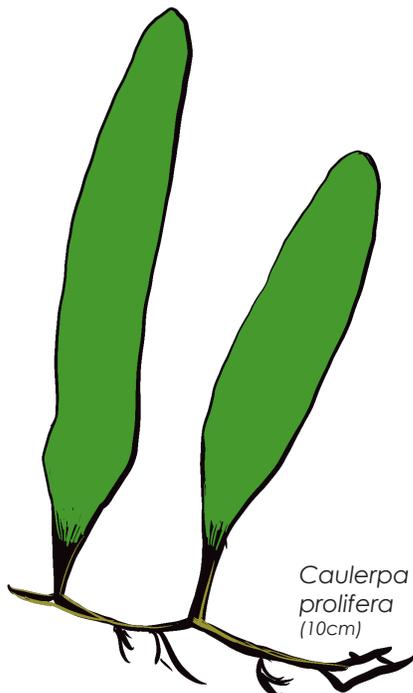
Previous Caulerpa Impacts

Caulerpa taxifolia invaded Agua Hedionda Lagoon and Huntington Harbor in the mid 2000s. In 2006, the \$7 million, multiagency battle against *C. taxifolia* ended in success. The ground-breaking effort resulted in a helpful list of critical elements for successful future eradication responses.

Partners

During the 2000-2008 *C. taxifolia* eradication, the Southern California Caulerpa Action Team (SCCAT) was formed for the prevention and detection of new infestations through outreach and surveillance. This includes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research, and local cities and ports.

Caulerpa taxifolia
(15 cm)



Caulerpa prolifera
(10cm)

New Invasion Alert! As of September 2023, there is a new *Caulerpa prolifera* infestation offshore the Coronado Cays in San Diego Bay. Scientific consensus is that immediate action to eradicate this population is needed. If not eliminated, *Caulerpa* could spread within the bay and to the important coastal habitats outside the bay. The Department is working with the SCCAT and other partners to address this new invasion.

Existing Laws

Assembly Bill 665 (2023) bans the sale, possession, transportation, and receipt of all species of *Caulerpa* in California. The City of San Diego also has an ordinance banning the possession, sale, and transport of the entire genus of *Caulerpa* within city limits. The Federal Noxious Weed Act (1999) and the Federal Plant Protection Act (2000) prohibit the import, interstate sale, and transport of the aquarium strain of *C. taxifolia*.

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Species/Caulerpa>