

Invasive Algae Response



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.

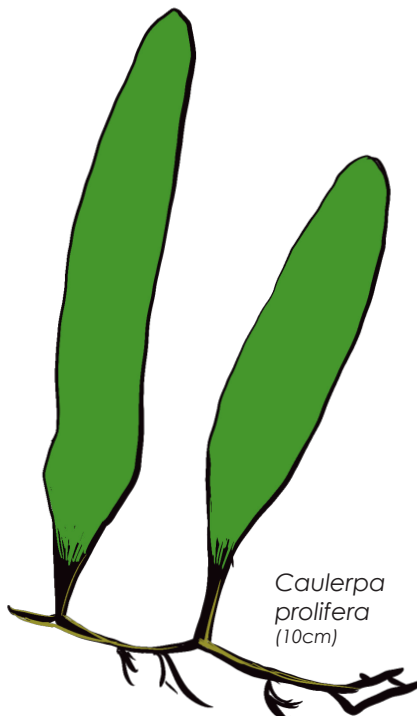
Previous Caulerpa Impacts

Caulerpa taxifolia invaded Agua Hedionda Lagoon and Huntington Harbor in 2000. In 2006, a \$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 2000-2006 *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, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research.

Caulerpa taxifolia
(15 cm)



Caulerpa prolifera
(10cm)

New Invasion Alert

As of April 2021, there is a new *Caulerpa prolifera* infestation near the entrance of Newport 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. In order to accomplish this, emergency funding is needed.

Existing Laws

Assembly Bill 1334(2001) bans nine species of *Caulerpa* but *C. prolifera* is not yet included on the list. The bill added Chapter 3.5 to Division 3 of the California Fish and Game Code. The City of San Diego 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*.

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