

# BULL KELP

(NEREOCYSTIS LUETKEANA)

Classification	
Kingdom	Chromista
Phylum	Ochrophyta
Class	Phaeophyceae
Order	Laminariales
Family	Laminariaceae
Genus	Nereocystis
Species	<i>N. luetkeana</i>

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Bull kelp is attached to the sea floor by a root-like holdfast. The kelp has a flexible stem, called a stipe, that may grow to around 20 feet in length. Toward the top of the kelp grows a bulb-like mass, called a float, which a dozen or more blades arise. The blades may grow up to 10 feet in length and are often seen flapping along the surface of the water with the currents.



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## HABITAT AND RANGE

Bull kelp helps form the kelp forest habitat. Kelp generally grows in the intertidal and subtidal zones on rocks approximately 4-22 meters deep.

Bull kelp may be found in areas ranging from the Aleutian Islands to southern California.



Nereocystis



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## DIET

Bull kelp is photosynthetic, acquiring its energy from the sun. However, bull kelp is eaten on by many organisms including sea urchins.



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## REPRODUCTION

Bull kelp is an annual seaweed, growing from its spore form to full maturity in a single year. A mature bull kelp will release a patch of spores, called a sori, aiding in the spores settling on nearby fertile substrate.





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## THREATS

Bull kelp is closely tied to sea urchin and sea otter populations. Over hunting of sea otters allow the kelp's primary predator to grow unchecked decimating kelp forests and resulting in urchin barrens.

Humans have also had an impact on kelp forests, harvesting the kelp for consumption, as a jelling or thickening agent and in fertilizers.





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## OTHER INTERSTING FACTS

Humans use bull kelp in many of their every day products including ice cream, salad dressing, sushi, paint, lotions, and toothpaste.

Bull kelp's float is filled with carbon monoxide. Its float help warn boaters when they're moving into more shallow waters.

Natives used the dried stipe of bull kelp to make fishing lines.

