Citizen Science case study - SeagrassSpotter

Knowing the precise location of where seagrass meadows are found across the Forth was one of the key pieces of information that guided our selection process for choosing restoration sites.

One tool that aided in identifying the locations of seagrass was **SeagrassSpotter**. SeagrassSpotter is a citizen science tool developed by Restoration Forth partner, Project Seagrass, and has been designed to enable the general public to contribute towards seagrass knowledge. This tool encourages people to locate and document where seagrass is found, while they explore the coast. Photographs of seagrass are tagged by location and then uploaded to a global map of seagrass sightings. This helps to fill in gaps in our knowledge of where seagrass exists, which is useful for conservation and restoration purposes. Identifying where seagrass is already growing is the first step in helping to protect these valuable habitats. You can help contribute to this by downloading the app or visiting SeagrassSpotter, and exploring the coastlines you visit.

As a project we decided not to develop our own seagrass citizen science tool and instead chose to use existing tools. SeagrassSpotter was an obvious choice to support and use. Restoration Forth's Seagrass Officers ran several events early in the project, using the SeagrassSpotter app as a platform to raise awareness of seagrass and to inspire people to contribute to its conservation. The user-friendly nature of the app gave people confidence they could make a meaningful contribution by submitting their own sightings. Not only were we able to contribute to the mapping of meadows in our local environment, but our sessions led participants to explore other regions of the Firth of Forth to map and document seagrass. This practice increased the number of sightings within the Forth in a short space of time, enhancing our knowledge of where seagrass is found along the Forth's coast.