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The distribution and habitation characteristics of *Zostera marina* L. along the southern coast of Korea

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An ecological study was performed to determine the geographic distribution, community structure, and habitat characteristics of eelgrass, *Zostera marina* L. beds along the southern coast of Korea. Plants and sediment samples were collected between June 2000 and December 2000 at twenty-seven locations, including two Cheju Island stations, which were used to compare morphological characteristics with habitats. The *Z. marina* populations exist from the intertidal to subtidal zone, mainly in the bays along the coast and island, the barrier reef, and the estuary at sites with a water depth of 0.6 - 7.8 m. The salinity range of *Z. marina* beds was from 18.20 to 34.46‰. Sediments of *Z. marina* beds constituted 49.7 - 99.1 % of sand contents, which were composed of sand, muddy sand, and sandy mud. The mean grain size varied from 1.5 to 4.4 phi. The height of vegetation shoots varied from 54.7 to 171.4 cm, depending on water depth, location, substrata and habitat types. The quantitative morphological features that enabled recognition of the two phenetic groups were short-narrow leaf type and long-broad leaf type. Statistical analysis indicated that the biomass of individual plants and their quantitative morphological characteristics were significantly correlated.