

MARINE LIFE SEAHORSES

THE MASTERS OF CAMOUFLAGE & COURTSHIP

Seahorses are unusual fish known for their upright posture, prehensile tails, armour-like body plates and remarkable breeding behaviour. They are slow, deliberate swimmers and favourites with macro divers and underwater photographers.

Pygmy seahorses are tiny specialists that blend perfectly into their surroundings.



QUICK FACTS

	SCIENTIFIC NAME	Family Syngnathidae (genus Hippocampus)
	SIZE	Usually 2–35 cm depending on species
	HABITAT	Seagrass, mangroves, coral reefs, algae and sheltered coastal habitats
	DEPTH RANGE	Shallow water to recreational diving depths; pygmy species often deeper on sea fans
	DIET	Tiny crustaceans and planktonic prey
	CONSERVATION STATUS	Many species threatened by habitat loss and collection

ANATOMY & ADAPTATIONS

LONG SNUOT

Tube-like snout sucks in tiny prey.

INDEPENDENT EYES

Each eye can move separately.

BODY ARMOUR

Bony plates instead of typical fish scales.

DORSAL FIN

Rapid fluttering fin provides propulsion.

MALE BROOD POUCH

Males carry and release the young.

PREHENSILE TAIL

Grips seagrass, coral and gorgonians.



HABITAT



Seahorses live among seagrass, mangroves, rubble, soft corals and reef structures where they anchor themselves with their tails and rely on camouflage.

COMMON LOCATIONS:

Seagrass beds | Mangroves | Coral reefs | Sea fans | Algae-covered rubble

BEHAVIOR & DIET



AMBUSH FEEDERS

Seahorses pick off tiny crustaceans such as copepods, mysids and larvae by sucking them in through their snouts.



COURTSHIP

Many species perform daily greeting rituals and the male carries the eggs in a brood pouch until birth.



DID YOU KNOW?

A male seahorse can give birth to dozens or even hundreds of babies, depending on the species.

PYGMY SEAHORSES



- Tiny specialists, often around 1.4–2.7 cm
- Famous for exceptional camouflage that matches host corals or algae
- Often found on sea fans, hydroids or algae depending on species
- Best known from the Coral Triangle and other Indo-Pacific macro destinations
- Wonderful photo subjects, but easily disturbed if divers get too close

FUN FACTS



Seahorses swim upright, unlike most fish.



They have no teeth and no true stomach.



Their tails can grip like a hand.



Colour can change to help with camouflage and display.



CONSERVATION

Seahorses face pressure from habitat loss, destructive fishing, bycatch and collection for traditional medicine, curios and the aquarium trade. Responsible diving, careful photography and habitat protection all help.



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