

Student

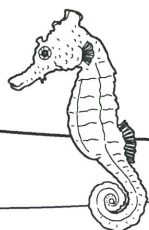
Fact Files



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

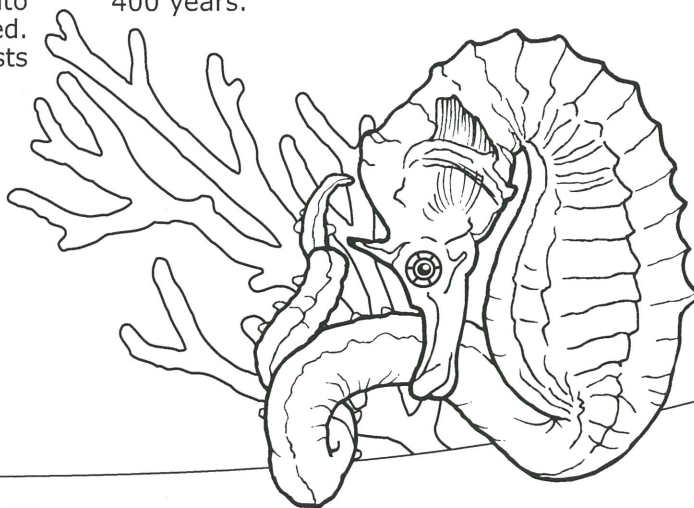
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May 2005

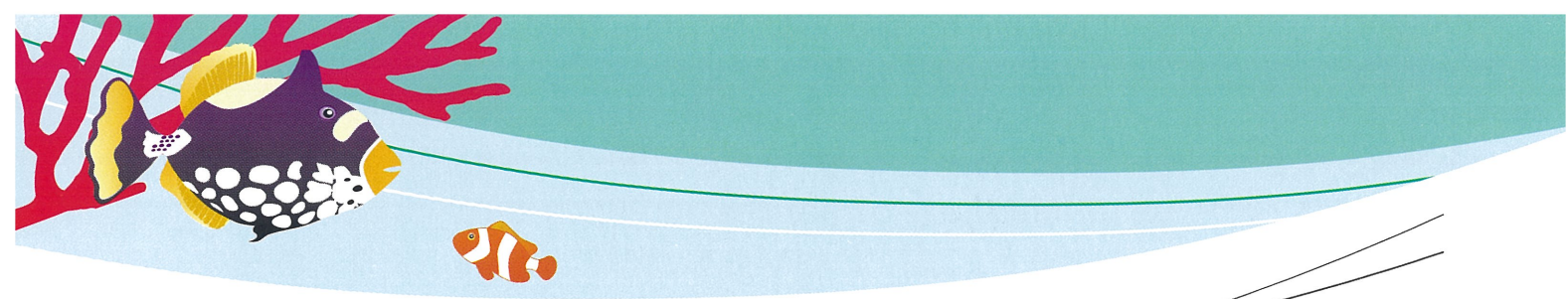
Seahorses ***Syngnathidae***

- Seahorses are among the slowest fish in the world! At top speed, some species take two and a half days to travel one kilometre!
- Because they are not strong swimmers, seahorses use their tail to hold on to corals and algae, and sometimes each other.
- The male seahorse is the one who becomes pregnant! The female places her eggs into the male's pouch, where they are fertilised. Males then undergo a pregnancy that lasts ten days to six weeks.
- Male seahorses may give birth to up to one hundred babies.
- Seahorses use their snout like a straw to swallow tiny animals known as plankton.
- Seahorses eyes move independently from each other – the right eye can look forward while the left eye looks back.
- Some Chinese and other Asian cultures have used seahorses in medicines for over 400 years.



our great barrier reef
let's keep it great





Seahorses are cryptic fish as most of them rely on their cryptic colouration or appendages for camouflage. They are very slow swimmers and have to rely on camouflage to hide from predators. Their natural predators include crabs, and rays.



Seahorses are small elongate fish encased in bony plates. They have angled heads with a snout and curled tails. As they are not strong swimmers, seahorses rely on their tails to hold on to algae and coral. To feed, seahorses use their tube-like mouth to suck in tiny plankton organisms. Seahorses live in seagrass beds, mangroves or coral reefs.

During mating the female seahorse deposits eggs into a pouch on the male's abdomen where they are fertilised and start to develop. After a few weeks, during which the male's pouch becomes quite swollen, he gives birth to up to one hundred young. Seahorses undergo elaborate courtship rituals every day to re-establish bonds with their partners.

Storms are one of the biggest threats to seahorses, as they can tear seahorses from their homes and cast them ashore.

