

Fun Fact Sheet: West Australian Seahorse

Region

West Coast, South Coast

Summary

Swaying in the current, anchored by their grasping tails, seahorses are actually a type of small fish - with bony plates protecting their bodies instead of scales.

Experts at blending in with their surroundings, seahorses can be found in seagrass meadows, sponge gardens and sheltered reef habitats along the Western Australian coast. They are very poor swimmers, anchoring themselves to stationary objects using their grasping (prehensile) tails.

Seahorses are actually a type of small bony fish – with bony plates protecting their bodies instead of scales. West Australian seahorses vary in colour but can be distinguished by the series of brown lines along the snout and growing to about 22 cm in length.

Their long tubular snouts end in tiny, toothless mouths, feeding on minute crustaceans and plankton that drift by, which are swallowed whole.

Most species of seahorse live in pairs. Female seahorses pass their eggs to the males, who incubate them in a protective pouch until they hatch.



Figure 1: Seahorses use their tails to anchor themselves to various habitats. (Image: Jan Richards)

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