



WEST AUSTRALIAN SEAHORSE

HIPPOCAMPUS SUBELONGATUS

DID YOU KNOW?

Seahorses get their scientific name from their 2 key features: a horse shaped head (Ippos = horse) and curved tail (Kampe = curved).

WHERE AT AQWA?

Magnify a seahorse in AQWA's Creatures Up Close exhibit.

SIZE:<25 CM

DIET: ZOOPLANKTON

MAIN PREDATOR: FISH, CARBS, RAYS

HABITAT: MUDDY, SILTY SEA FLOOR IN SHELTERED BAYS

FOUND: ONLY FOUND IN WA - CAPE LEEUWIN TO SHARK BAY

SWIMMING HORSES?

Seahorses are fish! Covered in bony plates of scales they have a tail that can curl and eyes that can move independently.

The West Australian Seahorse has stripes on its snout, it varies in colour from brown, white, red, orange to purple and can change colour slowly.

SEAHORSES SUCK!

Seahorses use their long straw-like mouths to suck up small crustaceans. They have no teeth and swallow the shrimp whole. Seahorses eat throughout the day as they cannot store food in their stomach for long.

AQUATIC DANCERS

Seahorses may be the slowest fish in the ocean but they can swim forwards, backwards, upwards and downwards. They have two sets of fins instead of 5, and can beat their fins up to 70 times per second.

LOVE STORY

Seahorses keep the same partner and will choose someone the same size. When courting and mating, seahorses dance together, synchronizing their movements and linking their tails to whirl around in unison. When their waltz is done, it is the male that takes the eggs and becomes pregnant! The eggs attach to the lining of his pouch. He nourishes them, giving birth 2-3 weeks later to 200 - 720 babies!

SEASONAL HOMES

In early summer, the West Australian Seahorse congregates in the lower reaches of the Swan River. This is when many crustaceans are spawning, providing lots of food for their young. Then in winter they move to deeper water.