

# Seahorses

## Discussion Questions

- 1) How are seahorses classified?
- 2) What environments do they inhabit?
- 3) What special adaptations do they have?



# Seahorses

Though it may not look like it, a seahorse is actually a type of bony fish! Its head has an elongated snout that makes it look like a horse's head. The body does not have scales but has skin stretched over bony plates. The tail can curl and uncurl and the seahorse can use it to hold onto sea grass while it is feeding for example. They range in size from 1.5 to 35.5 cm (0.6-14 inches).

Seahorses live in warm temperate climates. They can be found in shallow waters, living among coral reefs and sea grasses. They are poor swimmers, moving in an upright position by rapidly beating their pectoral and dorsal fins.

Male and female seahorses engage in elaborate courtship dances before the female selects her partner. Interestingly, the male seahorse looks after the fertilised eggs. He has a pouch which he uses to incubate the eggs until they are ready to hatch. Unfortunately, many hatchlings do not survive as they are eaten by predators.

Seahorses have traditionally been sought after ingredients in Chinese medicine. Seahorses are also harvested as delicacies in some Asian cuisines. Scientists believe that overfishing is having a detrimental effect on seahorse populations.

