Spotlight on Seahorses

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Lined Seahorse, *Hippocampus erectus*

explore a unique fish-keeping experience

Best known among the *Syngnathids* are the enchanting members of the *Hippocampus* genus, more commonly called seahorses. Inhabiting both tropical and temperate marine waters across the globe, seahorses and other *Syngnathids* offer the aquarist a unique fish-keeping experience unlike any other in the hobby.

A highly social fish, the seahorse is best kept in pairs or groups. Water temperature is one of the most vital aspects of a seahorse setup, so make sure you invest in adequate cooling equipment such as a chiller to maintain the recommended temperature parameters for your seahorse species.

One of the hardiest and most commonly available species is the Lined Seahorse, *Hippocampus erectus*. Captive-bred specimens are better suited to life in aquariums and easier to keep than wild-caught seahorses.

mister mom

Perhaps the most intriguing trait about seahorses is how they raise their young. In seahorses, it is the male who is "impregnated" by the female and who is responsible for carrying the fertilized eggs. The males are distinguished by the presence of a brood pouch on the abdomen, which hosts the eggs that the male seahorse receives from the female. Aquarists will delight in the ornate courtship ritual of the seahorse as the male and female dance and change colors while rising to the top of the aquarium. On the descent, the female deposits her eggs into the male's pouch, where they are then fertilized and incubated. After a few weeks on average, live tiny baby seahorses are born.

Brazilian Reidi Seahorse, *Hippocampus reidi*

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do your research

The theory that you can take care of seahorses the same way you do other marine fishes is misleading. The truth is, seahorse care is different and arguably more complex. They are prone to different diseases than most other fishes, such as Vibrio bacterial infections, gas bubble disease, and snout rot. In addition, tankmates should be non-aggressive species such as small gobies to avoid competition for the slow-eating seahorses' food supply (HUFA-enhanced frozen mysis shrimp or live mysis, copepods and amphipods).

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