

## Meet a seahorse in the AquariUM

One of the stars in the AquariUM is this tank. Here, you can find the seahorses!

These little fellows are well-known worldwide, but... How well do you really know them? If you stay with us, you might discover some interesting facts about these animals. (0'21'')

The first thing that might surprise you is that seahorses are fish, very unique fish indeed. And let's see why. (0'30'')

As you can observe, their body is completely different from one of a regular fish. This is due to their many adaptations. Seahorses have only three fins, the dorsal fin is in their back. Did you know they can flap it 70 times per second?! Incredible, isn't it? The other two fins are right behind their eyes, these are the pectoral fins and they use them for steering and stability. (1'06'')

The reason why seahorses have lost their caudal fin is because they normally live in shallow waters, so they need their tail to be able to grab anything around them, in order to avoid being dragged by the strong currents (1'27'')

Because they live in these rocky environments, their mouth has adapted as well, their tube-like mouth is called SNOUT, they use it to probe into the nooks and crannies of rocks looking for food. In captivity, seahorses are fed on small shrimps, so it is normal to see them using their snout as a straw to suck up the shrimps. (1'54'')

You can tell the difference between male and female seahorses by looking at their belly. Those with a prominent belly will be males. This belly is called BROOD POUCH, it forms from the ventral fins which have fused together creating this very important little bag. The female will produce the eggs, laying them inside this pouch. Here, the eggs will get fertilised by the male's waiting sperm. In the image, you can see a male on the right, showing us the entrance to the brood pouch (2'40'')



The fact that seahorses lay eggs but have internal fertilization and gestation makes them OVOVIVIPAROUS animals. With, as you may have guessed: pregnant daddies!! (You do know your business seahorse mummies!!) (3'12'')

Precisely, one of the most important seahorse reproductive programmes in the country is being carried out in the AquariUM. Specifically with populations of species that we can find in Mar Menor.

These are just some of the many interesting things you can learn about seahorses and the rest of animals in the AquariUM. Please, visit us to discover many more... You will find more information in our webpage. Cheers!

