

## Seahorse Facts

**What is a seahorse?** Seahorses are fish. They live in water, breath through gills and have a swim bladder. They have a long snake-like tail and a neck and a snout.

**Where are they found?** Along the west coast of Britain from the Shetland Isles down to Cornwall along the south coast of England.

**Snout:** Seahorses have long thin snouts which helps them poke into nooks and crannies for food. They suck their food up through their snouts like a vacuum cleaner. Their snouts can expand if their prey is larger than the snout. They cannot chew their food.

**Body:** Seahorses have an exo-skeleton. Their bodies are made up of hard, external, bony plates that are fused together with a fleshy covering.

**Baby Seahorses:** These are called fry. Once born they fend for themselves. They spend the first two to three weeks of their lives drifting along in the plankton layer of the ocean. Less than one in a thousand will survive long enough to become an adult due to predators.

**Pregnancy:** The female transfers her eggs to the male which he self-fertilises in his pouch. The number of eggs can vary from 50-150 for smaller species They receive everything they need in the pouch from oxygen to food.

**British Seahorses:** There are 2 species, The Long Snout and the Short Snout.

**Eyesight:** Seahorses have excellent eyesight and their eyes are able to work independently on either side of their head.

**Colour:** Seahorses can change colour very quickly and match any surroundings in which it finds itself. During courtship the male and female both change colour in a display.

**Tail:** Seahorses have a prehensile tail. This allows them to grip onto eel grass and other weeds and prevents them from being washed away by strong currents and waves.

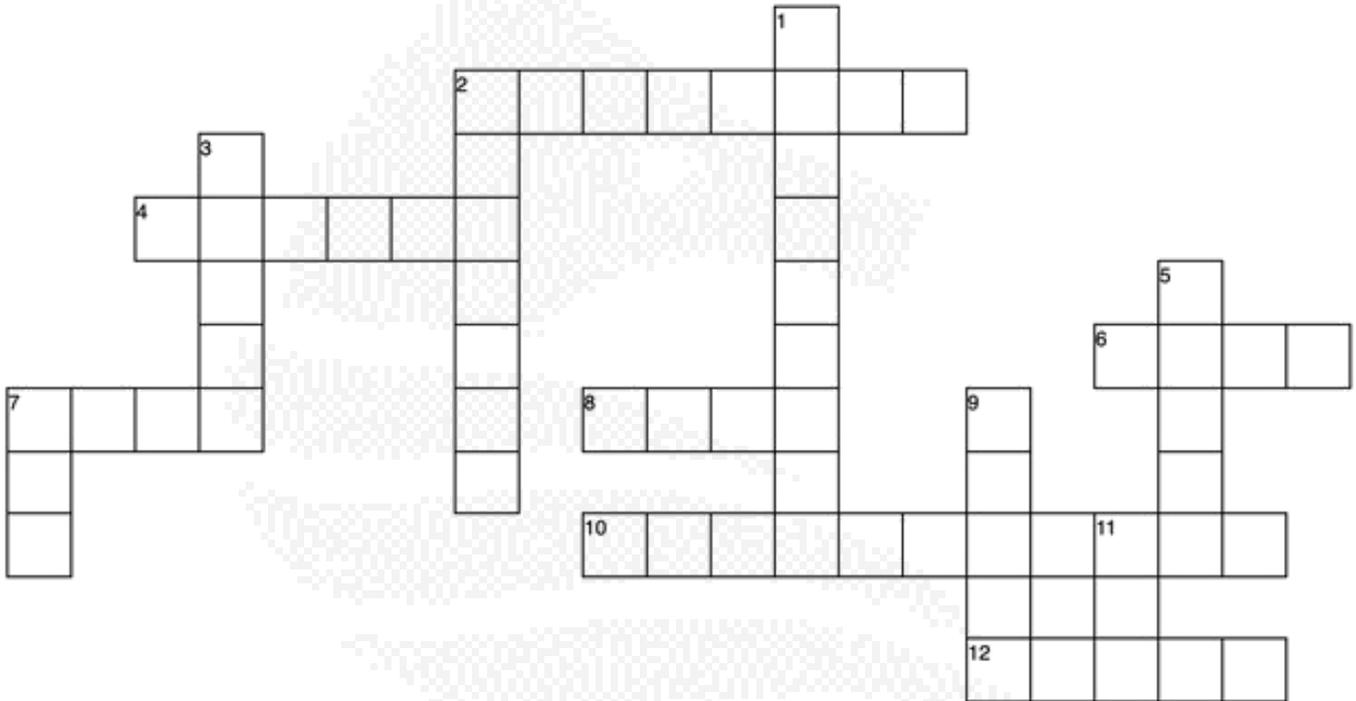
**Habitat:** Seahorses live in shallow weedy areas especially grass beds. In winter they move into deeper waters to escape the rough weather.

**Diet:** Seahorses eat small crustaceans such as Shrimp. An adult eats 30-50 times a day. Seahorse fry (baby seahorses) eat a staggering 3000 pieces of food per day.

**Movement:** Seahorses aren't very good swimmers. They rely on their dorsal fin beating at 30-70 times per second to propel it along. Pectoral fins either side of the head help with stability and steering.



## Seahorse Crossword



### Across

2. What sort of beds do seahorses live in?
4. Seahorses can change ...
6. Seahorses pair for ...
7. Seahorses are ...
8. Seahorses are ... swimmers
10. Seahorses bodies are an ...
12. What do seahorses suck their food up through?

### Down

1. Seahorses can look forward and ... at the same time
2. What do seahorses like to eat?
3. The female transfers her eggs to the male which he looks after in his ...
5. What's the Greek name for horse?
7. What are baby seahorses called?
9. What do seahorses use to breathe?
11. How many seahorses species can be found around the British coastline?