

Horsing Around in the Sea 海之骄子：海马

Aquariums are filled with a colorful and **diverse array** of **aquatic** life forms. But if you look carefully, in the depths of the tank, you may spot a creature that looks as though it could **gallop** as well as swim. It's the [seahorse](#) – one of nature's most fascinating creatures.

海洋馆充满了多彩丰富的大量水生生物。但如果仔细观察馆内水族箱的深处，你可能会发现一种看似不但能奔驰而且会游泳的动物——海马——大自然最迷人的生物之一。

Seahorses can be found around tropical [coral reefs](#) throughout the world. The name comes from its unusual head, which **bears a striking resemblance to** that of a horse. Unlike other fish, their bodies are covered with **spiked**, bony plates instead of scales. The plates protect seahorse and also help to **camouflage** them when danger is near, as they can be mistaken for **twigs**. Seahorses also have the ability to change their skin color. In addition, they can use their curved tails to **anchor** themselves to **seaweed**, and appear to be part of the plant. In combination, these **traits** make them masters at being **incognito**.

在世界各地的热带珊瑚礁周围，都可以发现海马的踪迹。「海马」这个名字来自于其不寻常的头部和陆地上的马有惊人的相似之处。覆盖着海马身体的是突出的骨板，不像其他的鱼类是覆盖着鳞片。此种骨板保护着海马，也帮助牠们在濒临危险时可被误认为是树枝已进行伪装；骨板也让海马有能力改变牠们的肤色。此外，牠们还可以用弯曲的尾巴把自己固定在海藻上，让牠们自己看起来像是植物的一部分。综合以上这些特点，海马精通于隐藏自己。

However, the most astonishing attribute of seahorses is their **mating** process, as males are responsible for bearing children. During reproduction, the female lays as many as 2,000 eggs into the male's stomach **pouch**. Then, the male carries them around until the eggs hatch, weeks later, and swim away.

然而，最令人惊讶的是海马交配过程中的特性，因为是由公海马负责育儿。在繁殖期间，母海马产下多达 2,000 颗卵到公海马的育儿袋。然后，公海马带着这些卵直到几个星期后小海马孵化完成，破卵而出，接着游离育儿袋。

As a species, seahorses face many threats in modern times. Their habitats are **deteriorating**, due to pollution and overfishing. They are also a hot commodity in traditional Chinese medicine, which is causing their population to **dwindle** further. Hopefully, environmentalists can convince fishermen to **hold their horses** on capturing seahorses, so these tiny **trotters** can continue to race across the sea.

以一个物种来说，海马在现代面临许多威胁。由于污染和过度捕捞，牠们的栖息地正在恶化中。海马在传统的中医用药也是种热门商品，而这是导致其数量进一步减少的原因。希望环保人士能说服渔民们能放慢捕捉海马的速度，好让这些马儿可以继续在海中竞赛。

— by Jamie Blackler

diverse [daɪ `vɜ:s] adj. 多种多样的; 不同的
array [ə`reɪ] n. 大量 [S][(+of)]
gallop [`gæləp] n. v.疾驰, 飞跑
spiked [spaɪkt] adj.插有尖物的
camouflage [`kæmə,flɑ:ʒ] v. n.伪装, 掩蔽
twig [twɪg] n. 细枝, 嫩枝
anchor [`æŋkə] v. 使固定, 系住
seaweed [`si,wɪd] n. 海草, 海藻, 海菜
trait [treɪ] n. 特征, 特点
incognito [ɪn `kɔgnɪ,tə] adj. 化装的, 隐匿姓名身份的
mating [`metɪŋ] n. 【动】交配
pouch [paʊtʃ] n. 【动】育儿袋
deteriorate [dɪ `tɪriə,ret] v. 恶化; 质量(或价值)下降
dwindle [`dwɪndl] v. 渐渐减少; 变小
trotter [`trɒtə] n. 小跑步的马; 快步走的人

Idiom

bear a resemblance to: 与....相似 to have a degree of similarity to someone or something

hold one's horses: 【口】等一下; 忍耐(或控制)自己的热情 to stop; halt