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# I am a seahorse



Hello

Oh, so you have spotted me, have you? Well, I might have an unusual shape for a fish, but that is exactly what I am. But I am called a seahorse because of the way I look.

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I'm actually quite small, just a few centimetres long. And I am very different from most fishes for, although I am a bony fish, I have no scales. Instead, I have a thin skin stretched over bony plates. Each plate is arranged in a ring.

I don't just look unusual, I also swim quite differently from other fish. I swim upright, but as you can see, I am not really designed for swimming as I have only a small fin on my back to help.

In fact, all I can manage is under two metres an hour, making me the slowest fish in the world.

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But it doesn't worry me, for I have a tail that I can wrap around plant stems and corals when I want to rest.

And you see my long snout? I suck up tiny plankton and shrimp from the sea with that. It's a sort of ambush.

When one comes by, I swivel around the stalk that my tail is holding. Or I can lean over and suck them off the coral or seabed.

And as plankton and shrimp are everywhere, swimming is not that much of a priority.

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I have one more difference, which is that my eyes swivel independently. If you know how that works for a chameleon, then you get the idea.

But, of course, as I can't swim very fast, I am in danger of being eaten by many large fish, so finding a protected place among the coral is quite important for me. Which is me, and which is the coral in this picture?

Now this picture shows me as quite fat. That is because I have a pouch in the front which is full of eggs.

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But I am not a female, for in us seahorses, it is the males who carry the eggs.



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I have a relative called a leafy sea dragon. It has lots of flowing leaf-like fans all over it. They act as camouflage, and make it look just like seaweed. They don't make it any easier to swim, though.

Now back to the plankton...

Goodbye



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