

Spiny Seahorses Recovering, Say Conservationists

What is a seahorse?

- A seahorse is a type of fish. They live in water and have gills.
- They have a long snout which they use to Hoover up food.

Today is World Oceans Day. Its aim is to celebrate and think about how we can look after our blue planet. Today's news focuses on how seahorses in the UK seem to be making a recovery.

In Studland Bay, Dorset [conservationists](#) have found 16 spiny seahorses. These have been rare in recent times.

The Seahorse Trust has been [monitoring](#) seahorses in the the bay since 2008. Not a single seahorse had been seen since 2018.

It has been suggested that the anchors of boats in the bay destroy the habitats of the seahorses. Also, seahorses are scared by the noises of boats and their passengers.

So, why are seahorses being spotted now? Well, since lockdown, there have been fewer people and boats visiting the area. This means that there has been less noise to scare the seahorses away.

Also, according to Neil Garrick-Maidment who runs the Seahorse Trust charity, their habitat of "seagrass has started to repair itself, and the spiny seahorses have taken advantage of this."

Among the seahorses found were pregnant males and a young seahorse. Male seahorses have a pouch for carrying young. They can carry up to 2000 at one time!

The [Latin](#) name for seahorses is 'hippocampus' which means 'horse monster.' Even though they have an unusual [resemblance](#) to horses, they are

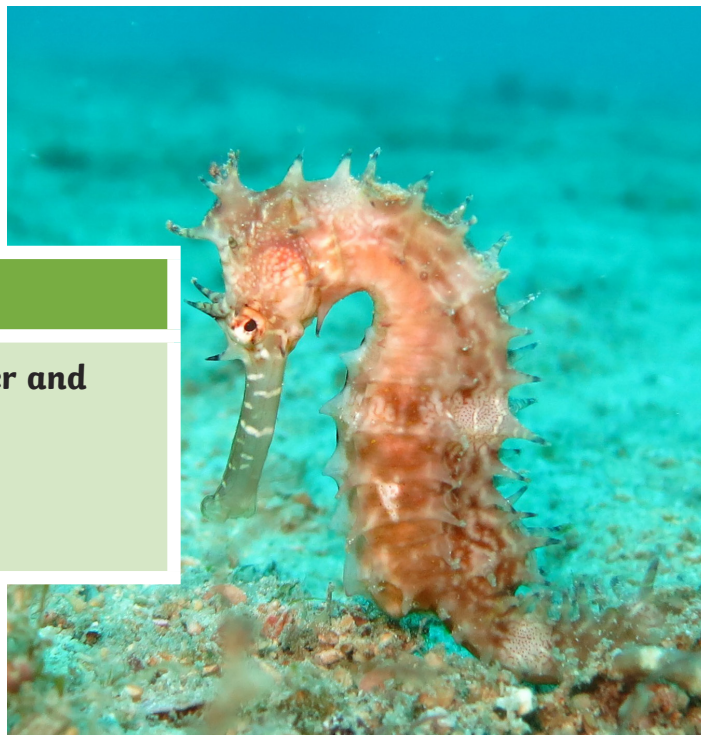


Photo: A seahorse.

in fact fish.

There are an estimated 54 species of seahorse around the world. The UK has two different types of seahorse; the spiny and the short-snouted seahorse.

Today marks World Oceans Day which has the theme 'Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean'. This is asking people to protect the oceans and the animals that live in them.

They hope to protect 30% of the Earth's land and sea by 2030. Hopefully with more protection this seahorse recovery will be the start of a real comeback for their numbers.

Glossary

conservationists	Someone who works to protect nature.
monitoring	To observe or check.
Latin	An ancient Roman language.
resemblance	To look like something else.

Questions

1. What two types of seahorse can be found in the UK?

2. What important job does the male seahorse have?

3. Tick each statement to show whether it is true or false.

	True	False
Seahorses are fish.		
There are 54 species of seahorse in the UK.		
Seahorses are monsters.		
Male seahorses carry their young in a pouch.		

4. What do you think conservationists will do next?

5. In the sentence 'These have been rare in recent times' what is meant by the word 'rare'.

- ☐ undercooked
- ☐ never seen
- ☐ common
- ☐ hardly seen

6. Summarise the key information in this news story in 15 words or fewer.

Answers

1. What two types of seahorse can be found in the UK?

The spiny seahorse and the short-snouted seahorse.

2. What important job does the male seahorse have?

Male seahorses can be pregnant. They carry their young in a pouch.

3. Tick each statement to show whether it is true or false.

	True	False
Seahorses are fish.	✓	
There are 54 species of seahorse in the UK.		✓
Seahorses are monsters.		✓
Male seahorses carry their young in a pouch.	✓	

4. What do you think conservationists will do next?

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to conservationists continuing to protect seahorses in the UK, e.g. I think that conservationists will come up with a plan to keep the bay quiet so that more seahorses can live there.

5. In the sentence 'These have been rare in recent times' what is meant by the word 'rare'.

- ☐ undercooked
☐ never seen
☐ common
☒ **hardly seen**

6. Summarise the key information in this news story in 15 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer that summarises the story in 15 words or fewer, e.g. 16 spiny seahorses were spotted in Dorset. Their numbers increased because it has been quiet.