

Project Seahorse

Advancing marine conservation

ZSL
LIVING CONSERVATION

ZSL Conservation



Seahorse threats

- Overexploitation for traditional medicine, aquarium and curio trades
- Bycatch, especially in shrimp trawls
- Habitat destruction and loss



Seahorses - icons for marine conservation

Project Seahorse aims to secure the future of seahorse populations globally. Seahorses are charismatic, fascinating and engaging and their quirky features make them one of the most iconic of fishes. Their reproductive strategy – including pair bonding and male pregnancy – is extraordinary in the animal kingdom. Most importantly, seahorses are representative of the global threats to marine life: overfishing, non-target fisheries (bycatch) and habitat degradation and loss.



©Melissa Rushby

Global experts

Project Seahorse was co-founded by ZSL in 1996. We discovered the large, global and unsustainable trade in seahorses. Working in collaboration with fishing communities in the Philippines, Chinese medicine traders in Hong Kong, and the international aquarium community we have advanced seahorse conservation and management. In 2002, we mentored the first listing of a marine fish of commercial importance under the Convention for the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), a landmark agreement among 172 nations. We have become the recognised global authority on seahorses as measured by our role as Chair of the CITES working group, IUCN Red List Authority (www.iucnredlist.org), FishBase authority (www.fishbase.org) and prolific authors of papers on seahorse biology, research and management.

Project Seahorse

Advancing marine conservation



ZSL Conservation



Project highlights

Examples of Project Seahorse's work, innovation and success include:

- Conducting field research on seahorses and their relatives in 12 countries across six continents.
- Publishing the first seahorse identification guide and discovering nine new species.
- Catalysing the creation of 31 community managed no-take marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Philippines and monitoring their effectiveness.
- Establishing and mentoring a small-scale fishers' alliance in the Philippines that now implements MPAs and encourages sustainable fishing.
- Assisting Chinese medicine business groups in developing voluntary codes of conduct for seahorse imports to Hong Kong.



Partners



Looking to the future

Project Seahorse's vision is a world with healthy and well managed marine ecosystems. Our successes promote effective change, stimulating management and policy action, and ranging from the community to international level. We direct our work at achieving the greatest conservation success, drawing on our reputation for research rigour and independence.

Our future priority areas are:

- Identifying global seahorse hotspots that establish species' distributions, habitats and threats.
- Managing a sustainable global seahorse trade.
- Reducing seahorse bycatch in tropical shrimp trawls.
- Implementing effective no-take MPAs, including protecting at least 1% of the Danajon Bank double barrier reef, Philippines.
- Supporting the establishment of the Danajon Bank as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

By using seahorses as a focus for our work, we will secure a future for these remarkable animals while pioneering approaches and solving problems that affect most marine life.



More Information

For more information on this project please contact Dr Heather Koldewey (heather.koldewey@zsl.org) www.projectseahorse.org

