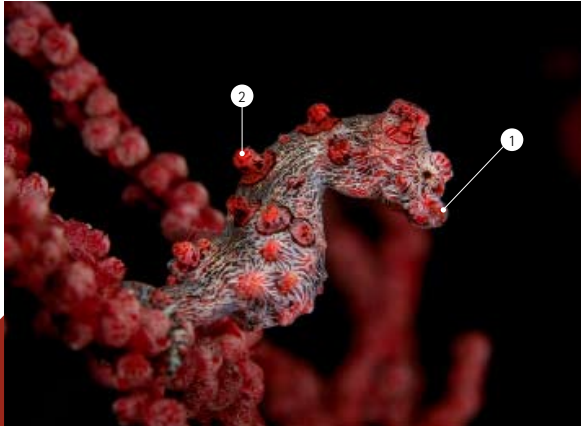


Species Showdown



PYGMY SEAHORSE
Hippocampus bargibanti



DENISE PYGMY SEAHORSE
Hippocampus denise

By Dave Harasti

Taxonomy	Family Syngnathidae	Family Syngnathidae
Distribution	Western Pacific: From the Great Barrier Reef in Australia to Indonesia, Philippines and southern Japan. Found on gorgonian fans (generally <i>Muricellae</i> sp.) from depths of 15 to 50 metres.	Western Pacific: From the Solomon Islands, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, and North Sulawesi (Indonesia); it's yet to be recorded in Australia. Found on various gorgonians from depths of 12 to 70 metres.
Morphology	Generally red in colour ¹ , however can be orange and yellow. Covered in little warty-like tubercles ² that assist with its camouflage on the gorgonians.	Differs from <i>H. bargibanti</i> by having fewer or no tubercles ³ , is more slender in shape, and smaller. Generally yellow-orange ⁴ in colour but some individuals can be white or red.
Breeding	Breeding season is considered to be all year round with gestation in <i>H. bargibanti</i> lasting approximately two weeks. At birth the babies are only about 2 mm long.	Breeding season is considered to be all year round with gestation in <i>H. denise</i> lasting approximately two weeks. At birth the babies are only about 2 mm long.
Size	Maximum recorded length is 2.4 cm.	The smallest described seahorse, with a maximum length of 2.1 cm.
Fun Fact	Some gorgonians can host large colonies of this species with dozens recorded on a single fan!	This species was named after photographer Denise Tackett, who was the first to notify the scientific community about this tiny seahorse.



Over the past couple of years several other new pygmy seahorses have been discovered in the tropical waters of Indonesia and Japan. The Pontohi pygmy seahorse, found originally off Bunaken Island in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, is a small seahorse that can be very difficult to photograph. It's currently being described by scientists. [so](#)

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