



PIPEFISH

FAMILY: SYNGNATHIDAE

DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 200 types of pipefish in the world! Some can change colour and one can be found in water 400m deep!

WHERE AT AQWA?

Play a game of hide and seek with these mysterious creatures in AQWA's Far North.

SIZE: <65CM

DIET: SMALL CRUSTACEANS, FISH EGGS

MAIN PREDATOR: FISH

HABITAT: SEAGRASS, CORAL REEFS

FOUND: TROPICAL AND SUB-TROPICAL WATERS, USUALLY COASTAL AND MARINE.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Syngnathidae means 'jaw fused' describing their characteristic snout. Right at the end is a small toothless mouth that opens upwards to rapidly suck their food in.

THE MYSTERIOUS THREE

Pipefish, seahorses and seadragons all belong to the same family of fishes, with most pipefish looking like a straight bodied seahorse. They share an unusual body shape, fused jaw, slow swimming style and armour plated body.

ARMOUR PLATED

Pipefish have a longer backbone than other fish. They don't have ribs but are covered instead with bony rings that are imbedded into their skin.

SWIMMING STYLES

Imagine looking just like your house! With a long thin body pipefish look just like the seagrass in which they live. But that's not all - they also imitate it by positioning themselves upright and swaying softly. Most pipefish have a small fan shaped tail however it is their long clear dorsal fin that does most of the work, moving rapidly to keep them hovering amongst the blades of seagrass.

LOVE DANCING

Pipefish have a secretive lifestyle, spending their days looking and acting like strands of seagrass, floating the current - all of this is put on hold however when the boys try to impress the girls with their lengthy and complicated love dances. The daddies have the babies and will hold the eggs in a special pouch, a spongy patch on their belly, or in specially folded skin.