

## Southern Knight Seahorse

### *Hippocampus abdominalis*



#### Natural Range

Southern Knight Seahorses are temperate marine fish found in coastal waters of south-eastern Australia and also in New Zealand.

#### Maximum Size and Longevity

Grows to 20–25cm in Australian waters, grows to 30cm in New Zealand in cooler conditions. They can live up to 9 years.

#### Water Quality

- Temperature: 15°C - 21°C.
- pH: 8.0—8.4
- SG: 1.020

#### Feeding

Southern Knight Seahorses have been trained to eat frozen brine shrimp and frozen plankton but should not be fed exclusively on brine shrimp. Small frozen krill, mysis shrimp and mixed ocean plankton are all readily available and make ideal foods. Ensure no uneaten food remains in the aquarium.

#### Compatibility

Seahorses are best kept without any other fish species, as their gentle nature does not allow them to compete for food.

4-6 seahorses per 40 litres is recommended to allow for growth. Allow at least 50 litres water capacity for each adult pair of Southern Knight Seahorses.

#### Colour and Varieties

Colours can vary as Seahorses are able to mimic their surroundings. Usually olive, white or golden, with variable dark spotting.

#### Breeding

When Seahorses breed, the male holds the eggs in a pouch and gives birth to hundreds of tiny live seahorses!

Southern Knight Seahorses begin breeding at 4 months of age. Males can be recognized by their belly pouch, they actually inflate the pouch to its' maximum extent to try and impress potential mates. During spawning females transfer their eggs to the male's pouch where they are nurtured for about 30-50 days, depending on temperature. Large specimens release broods of 300 - 400 fry. In the wild, males release 3 or 4 broods over summer. The male's pouch is white and darkens in colour as the eggs develop. Newborn fry are about 21mm long and can be fed on live baby brine shrimp.

#### General Information

Southern Knight Seahorses make a fascinating and enjoyable pet. They are also quite easy to keep - if given a few simple requirements such as the correct temperature, filtered water, regular water changes, and correct feeding.