

Seahorses do not like polluted habitats and haven't been seen on the Elizabeth River in years past. However, in 2016 one by one these little seahorses have been coming back to the Elizabeth River as a sure sign that the health of the river is improving!



Lined Sea Horse

Hippocampus erectus

Common Names: Northern Seahorse, Spotted Seahorse

Size: Can grow up to 6 inches and start out life at less than half an inch.

Lifespan: Up to 4 years

Habitat: The Elizabeth River and the Chesapeake Bay

Range: The Atlantic Ocean from Canada in the north to the Caribbean and Mexico in the south.

Diet: Lined seahorses eat mostly tiny crustaceans (small animals with a hard outer shell) and brine shrimp, which they suck through their long tube-like mouth. Lined seahorses are not good swimmers, so they rely on their coloring and patterns to blend into their habitat and sneak up on their prey.

Appearance: Seahorses have good camouflage to blend into their habitat. They can be found in many different colors including black, brown, gray, green, red, orange, or yellow. The males and females are relatively easy to tell apart. The males are usually bigger than the females, and have a large brood pouch (like a kangaroo's pouch where they hold the eggs until they hatch).

Predators: Lined seahorses do not get very big so they are included in the diets of many animals. In the Elizabeth River and Chesapeake Bay they are eaten by crabs, seabirds, and larger fish.

Voice: You wouldn't really think that fish make noise, but when seahorses do their dance with their mate, they make small clicking sounds at each other to communicate!

What can you do? Keep marine debris and trash out of the Elizabeth River. Help to prevent run-off by washing your car on the grass, disposing of oils and chemicals properly, and picking up your dog's poop when taking them on a walk.

On-Line Resources

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/fieldguide/critter/lined_seahorse

<https://www.dcnature.org/lined-seahorse/>

<https://elizabethriver.org/pbs-activity-do-you-see-my-seahorse?page=9>



www.elizabethriver.org