

Weedy Seadragon

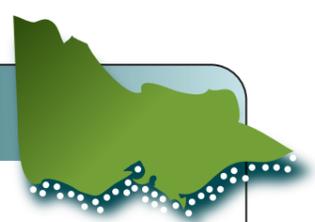
Phyllopteryx taeniolatus



Features and adaptations

- 1 Long patterned body with leaf-like fins for camouflage
- 2 Long snout like a straw for slurping up food
- 3 Short spines on back for protection
- 4 Tail used to steer, not to grip on to seaweed
- 5 Males carry eggs under their tail, not in a pouch

Habitat



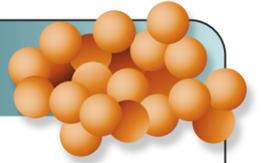
Weedy Seadragons live in the shallow coastal waters of Victoria. They can be found tumbling and drifting along in the current, camouflaged in seaweed and seagrass. This precious habitat is threatened by human activity, which is why it's important to understand how the land and sea are connected.

Diet



Weedy Seadragons are carnivores. They find small shrimp-like animals, sea-lice and tiny worms in the water with their great eyesight. The Seadragons drift towards their prey and slurp them up using their long snouts like a straw. Since they don't have a stomach, Weedy Seadragons eat often and slowly.

Life stages



Like seahorses, male Weedy Seadragons carry the eggs. Since males don't have pouches, female Seadragons place about 250 eggs onto a spongy patch under the male's tail. The male incubates them for eight weeks. The miniature Seadragons swim away as soon as they hatch.

Threats



Weedy Seadragons are threatened by human activity on land as well as in the ocean. Litter, waste water, oils and fertiliser can drift into the ocean and pollute their habitat. Climate change is beginning to alter shallow coastal water conditions. This will lead to the loss of important seaweed and seagrass beds.

Conservation



We can all care for Weedy Seadragons. Keeping their habitat healthy by picking up litter, safely disposing chemicals, using eco-friendly cleaning products and limiting fertiliser use is a great start. We can also support rangers and friends to set up and care for marine protected areas.