

Seahorse Safety

- One of the first things a seahorse does when you approach it is to turn its back to you; this is a defensive and natural reaction. It hopes you can't see it. If you sit quietly it will settle and turn back again but a lot of divers are impatient and try to turn the seahorse which only cause it immense stress and is against the law.
- It is against the law to touch a seahorse without a license in some countries like England and Wales
- As a Seahorse gets stressed, its colour starts to darken and it bends its head downwards to present less of a profile. If this is continuous then it could in the long term lead to the death of the animal.
- Strictly no touching of the seahorses it is against the law.
- Do not hover over the seahorses this stresses them, as they think a predator is above them
- The use of flash photography is banned by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) when photographing seahorses on any site in England and Wales even with a license, if in doubt leave your flash behind or make sure it is turned off prior to the start of the dive.
- If there are a number of divers do not surround the seahorse (a semi-circle is better) so the seahorses can move on if they want to.
- If they do move off do not chase them, this is disturbance and is against the law.
- Maximum of 6 to 8 divers near any one seahorse (preferably less), if there are a number of divers take turns to see the seahorse.
- DO NOT chase the seahorses.
- Spend no more than a maximum of 5 minutes on the seahorses to stop them getting stressed and then move on.
- Any seahorses seen need to be reported to The Seahorse Trust to help with the research
- To actively seek out seahorses and photograph them, a licence is required.
- Do not chase, disturb or touch seahorses. Seahorses are a protected species and it is an offence to disturb them. It is an exciting experience to see one but it is best for you and the seahorse to keep your distance and calmly observe. If the seahorse swims away, do not pursue it.
- Please send details of any sightings to the www.theseahorsetrust.org

Disclaimer

The Seahorse Trust encourages cautious and respectful diving to others and the environment. To safely conduct any dive, participants must rely on their own abilities, training and knowledge of local conditions, including tide, weather and boating activities. The Seahorse Trust provides the above information to help advise and encourage the safe conduct of any dive but accepts no responsibility for anyone who disregards their training or any safety advice or takes unnecessary risks.