



Seadragon husbandry in the new millennium: Lessons learned from the past will create a sustainable future

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The Dallas World Aquarium (DWA) has displayed Leafy Seadragons (*Phycodurus eques*) since 1994 and is a leader in the husbandry of these popular syngnathids. In 1997 and 1999 the DWA shared husbandry information with industry professionals at national zoo conferences. These meetings led to worldwide collaboration between aquarists struggling to understand the specialized husbandry of these fish, and resulted in the publication of the first Leafy Seadragon Husbandry document in 2005. In 2008 the DWA hosted the first Seadragon Husbandry Symposium, which was an invaluable forum for information exchange.

Over the years, collaboration has resulted in improvements in husbandry practices and survivability of seadragons in aquariums, and several facilities have successfully bred the Weedy Seadragon (*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*). As yet, however, no aquariums have reported successful reproduction of the Leafy Seadragon. The limited availability of wild caught specimens and the need for sustainability of our collections makes it increasingly important to breed these animals in captivity.

Leafy Seadragons are important marine ambassadors. Their successful captive breeding requires the sharing of knowledge of, in particular, disease diagnosis and treatment, nutrition, and exhibit design.