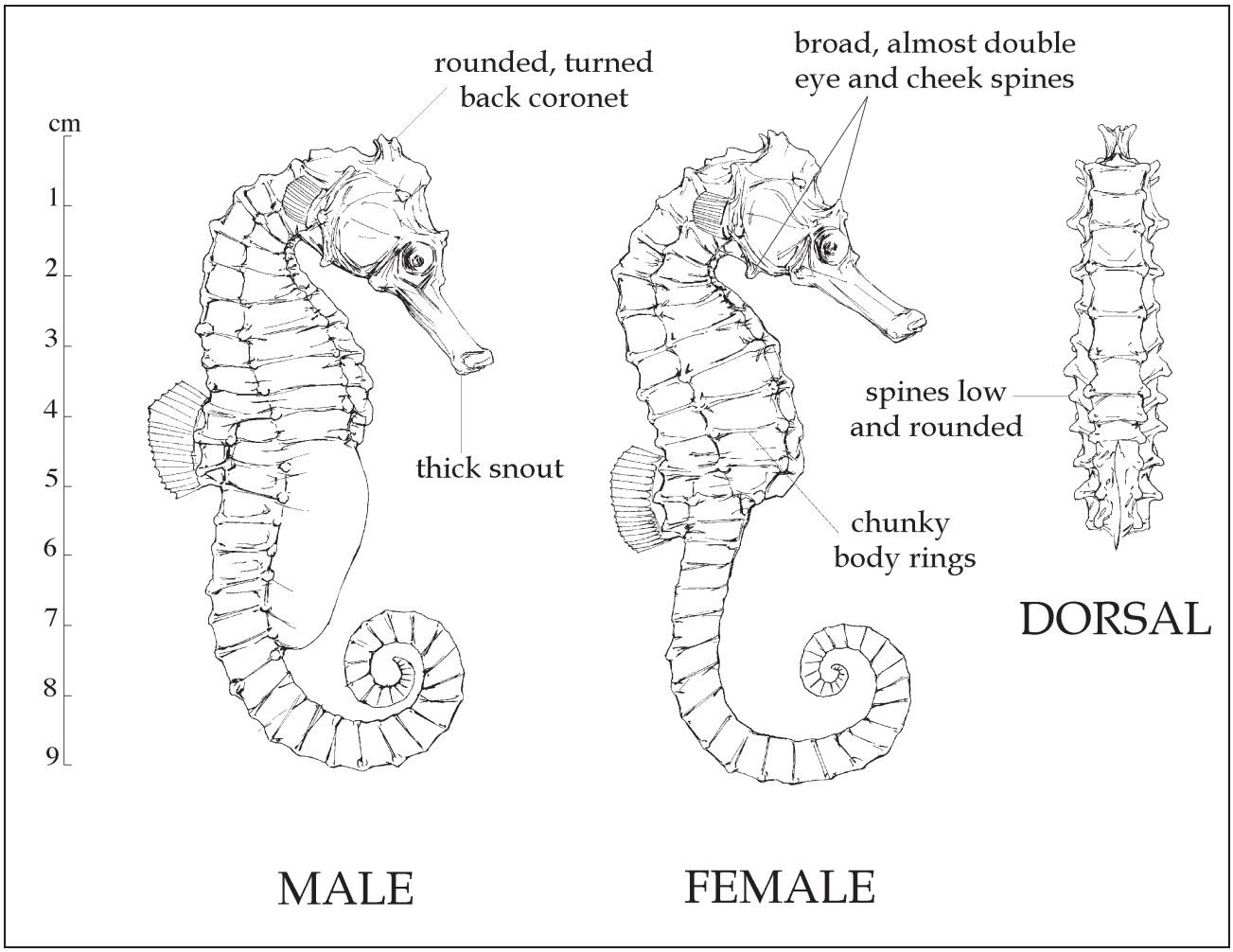
Hippocampus algiricus Kaup 1856

Common names
West African seahorse

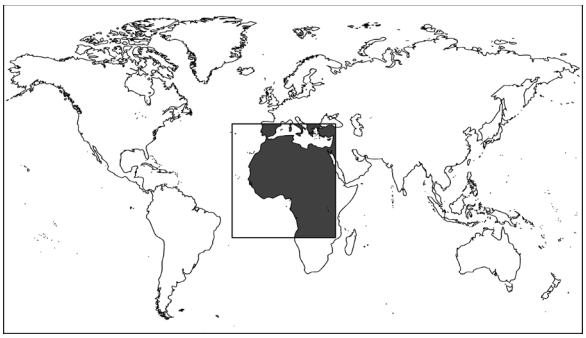
Synonyms
H. punctulatus Kaup 1856; *H. deanei* Duméril 1857; *H. kaupii* Duméril 1870

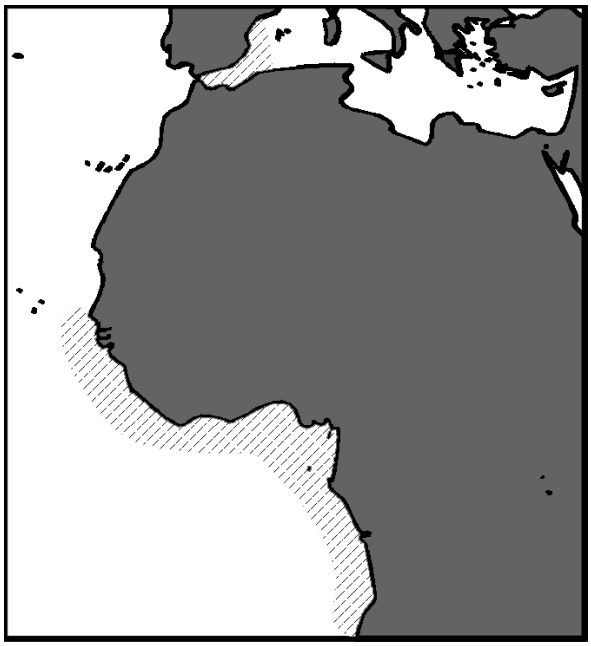


Description
Maximum recorded adult height: 19 cm[2]
Trunk rings: 11
Tail rings: 36 (35–37)
HL/SnL: 2.4 (2.1–2.6)
Rings supporting dorsal fin: 2 trunk rings and 1 tail ring
Dorsal fin rays: 17–18
Pectoral fin rays: 16–17 (15–17)
Coronet: Relatively low, rounded and overhanging at the back; flat-topped or with a slight depression
Spines: Low, rounded bumps only
Other distinctive characteristics: Body rings chunky; eye and cheek spines broad or almost double
Colour/pattern: May be covered with tiny white dots and/or larger brown spots

Confirmed distribution
Angola; Benin; Côte D'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; Nigeria; São Tomé and Principe; Senegal; Sierra Leone

Suspected distribution
Algeria; Cameroon; Congo; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Guinea-Bissau; Togo





Habitat
Unknown

Life history
Unknown

Trade
Not yet seen in international trade. This region is, however, believed to be a source of imports, and *H. algiricus* is the only species in the region

Conservation status
The entire genus *Hippocampus* is listed in Appendix II of CITES, effective May 2004[1]. *H. algiricus* is listed as Data Deficient by IUCN[13]

Similar species
- *H. ingens* has more tail rings, a single cheek spine, and usually more dorsal fin rays; it is found only off the west coast of the Americas
- *H. kelloggi* has more tail rings and single eye and cheek spines; it is found only in the Indo-Pacific basin
- *H. kuda* has single eye and cheek spines and is found only in the Indo-Pacific basin
- *H. reidi* has fewer tail rings and a larger coronet; it is found only in the Caribbean

Other notes
- Genetic research suggests that this species is part of the *H. kuda* complex (see Appendix D) and is closely related to both *H. kuda* and *H. reidi*[40]
- Specimens seen from Nigeria and Angola have more developed spines than those from further north and west
- The type specimen apparently comes from Algeria, but no further specimens from the Mediterranean have been seen. Probable distribution is restricted to West Africa