

Ocean Doppelgangers

**LAND AND SEA
LOOK-ALIKES**

**WORLD OCEAN
DAY 2026**

June 8

"Reimagine: Beyond the world
we know, a new relationship
with our ocean"

**From forest floors to ocean
beds — discover the hidden
connections between two
worlds.**





Lettuce vs. Sea Lettuce



Nature's Botanical Twins

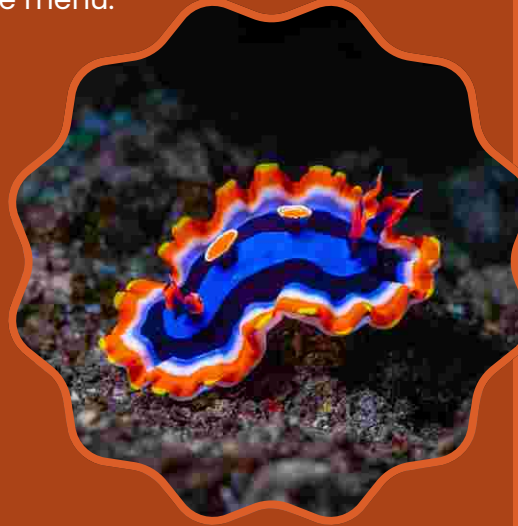
While land lettuce requires soil and fresh water to give you your daily salad, Sea Lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*) thrives in saltwater, anchoring itself to rocks. It absorbs nutrients directly from the water and is a vital food source for sea turtles!

NUDIBRANCH (SEA SLUG)

Both are mollusks, but the Nudibranch traded the heavy, boring shell of its land cousin for fabulous, toxic defense mechanisms. Their name means "naked gill," and they flash bright colors to warn predators that they are absolutely not on the menu.

The Comparison

Both mollusks, but wildly different lifestyles. Snails carry a heavy shell for protection. Nudibranchs use toxic chemicals and vivid colors. Nudibranch means "naked gill" - no shell needed! Bright neon colors warn predators: do not eat me.



GARDEN SNAIL

VS. NUDIBRANCH



Mollusks of Two Worlds!



They both have elongated snouts – but that's where the similarities end! Seahorses are actually eccentric fish. They swim upright, have prehensile tails like monkeys, and uniquely, the males are the ones who give birth to the babies!

Key Differences

Horse gallops; seahorse swims upright

Horse tail flows; seahorse tail grips

Male seahorses give birth to young!

Some species associated with corals camouflage and will show off vibrant colors

MEET THE SEAHORSE!





SPIDER VS. SEA SPIDER



Don't worry, they don't spin webs!
Sea Spiders (Pycnogonids) are found in oceans worldwide, especially in the icy Antarctic. Their bodies are so small that their vital organs, like their digestive tract, actually live inside their long legs.

Unlike their land-dwelling cousins, sea spiders have no silk glands and pose no threat to humans. They are ancient marine arthropods that have roamed the ocean floors for hundreds of millions of years, quietly thriving in some of the most extreme environments on Earth.



Sea Spider (Pycnogonida)





Cucumber VS.

Sea Cucumber.

Same Name. Different Worlds.



the sea cucumber is the ocean's ultimate janitor. Sea Cucumbers are echinoderms — closely related to starfish and sea urchins.

They crawl slowly along the seafloor, consuming detritus and organic matter, filtering sand as they go — making them vital to the health of the marine ecosystem.



Sea Grapes (Green Caviar)

WHAT ARE SEA GRAPES?

Caulerpa lentillifera is a species of green algae found across the Indo-Pacific. Unlike land grapes, these grow along the seabed in warm, shallow coastal waters, forming lush, pearl-like clusters.



TASTE & TEXTURE

Sea grapes deliver a uniquely satisfying crunch. Each tiny bubble bursts with a salty, briny pop — remarkably similar to caviar — making them a prized delicacy in Filipino, Japanese, and other Indo-Pacific cuisines.

CULINARY USES

Served fresh in salads, as a sushi topping, or simply with vinegar and soy sauce, sea grapes are celebrated for their flavor and texture. They are also rich in minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants.

”

**Tiny bubbles, big flavor
— the ocean's answer to
caviar.**

“

OCEAN HARVEST

Harvested from shallow tropical waters, sea grapes thrive in the Indo-Pacific region. Their jewel-like appearance and caviar-like pop have made them a beloved local delicacy and an emerging global superfood.





Land Cow vs. Sea Cow

Both are peaceful herbivores that love to spend all day chewing on grass! While the land cow grazes in fields, the Sea Cow (Dugong) is a marine mammal that vacuums up underwater seagrass meadows.



Sea Cow

The Dugong is a massive, gentle marine mammal that vacuums up bright green seagrass from the ocean floor – a true underwater grazer!

Butterfly vs. Sea Butterfly

The Sea Butterfly

Life in the Deep Sea

Unlike their land namesake, Sea Butterflies drift through cold, dark ocean waters. These translucent creatures are pteropods — mollusks that use wing-like extensions to propel themselves gracefully through the deep blue sea. It uses a modified foot split into two flaps to "fly" through water.



Sea Butterflies are actually tiny swimming sea snails. Over millions of years, their foot evolved into two wing-like flaps, allowing them to literally flap through the water column in the dark, freezing depths of the ocean.



One flies through sunny gardens, the other through the dark ocean depths



While land lions use camouflage to stalk prey on the savanna, Sea Lions are highly intelligent marine mammals built for underwater acrobatics.

Key Differences:

Lions have a mane; Sea Lions have flippers

Lions hunt on land; Sea Lions dive deep

Lions live in prides; Sea Lions form colonies

Both are fiercely vocal and social

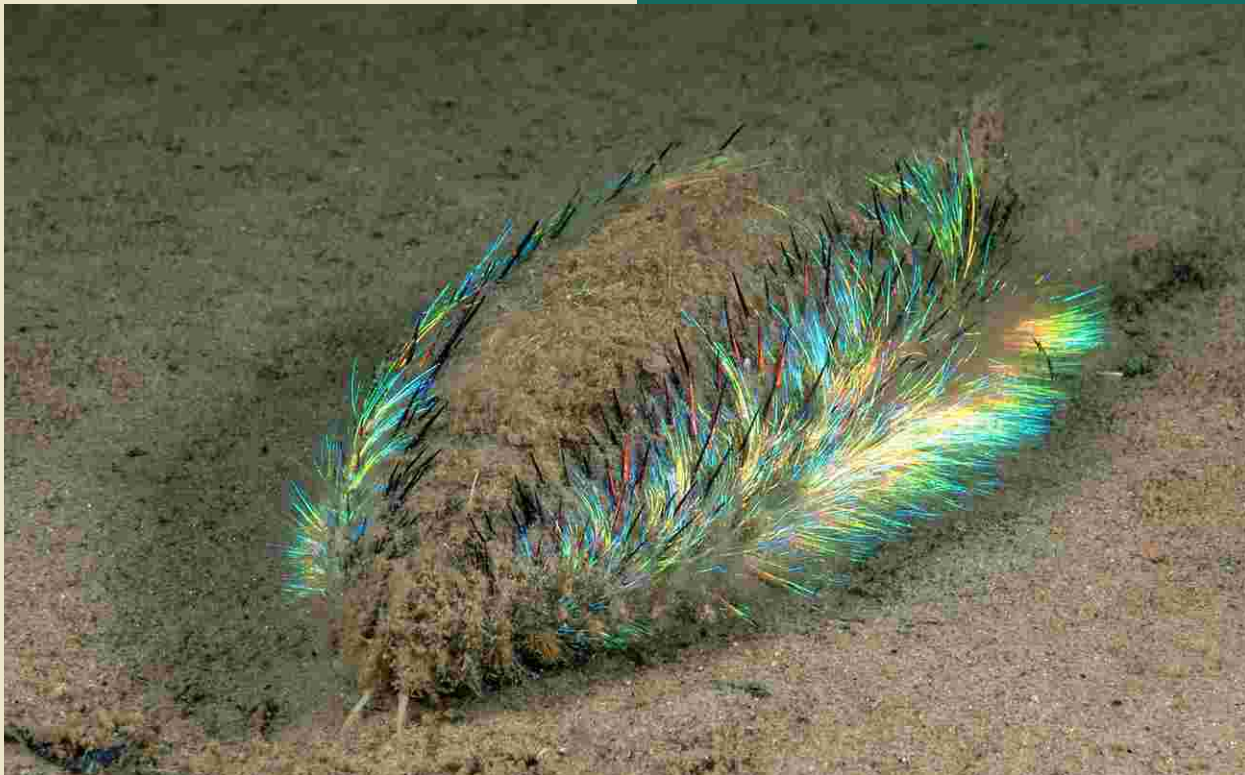
Lion vs. SEA LION



Mouse vs. Sea Mouse

What do mice and sea mice have in common?

Despite sharing a name, mice and sea mice are not related at all. Both have soft, hair-covered bodies and a similar oval silhouette — which is exactly why the sea mouse earned its nickname. That is where the similarities end.



Sea Mouse

*glamorous
marine worm.*

The Sea Mouse (*Aphrodita aculeata*) is actually a marine worm, not a rodent. It lives on muddy seafloors and gets its name from its oval, furry body that resembles a drowned mouse. It can grow up to 20 cm long.

Why does the Sea Mouse shimmer?

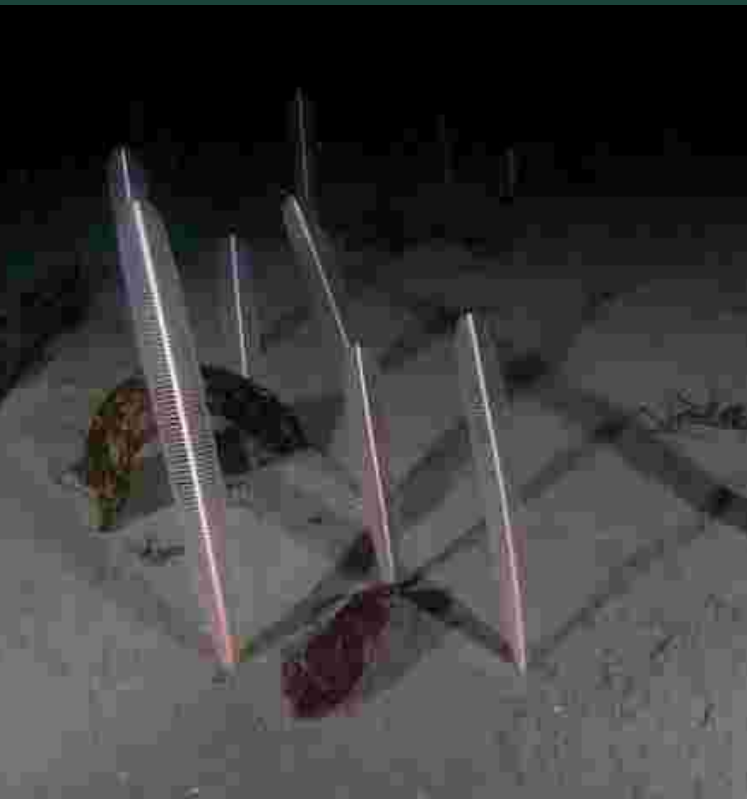
The Sea Mouse is covered in iridescent, felt-like hairs called chaetae. Underwater, these hairs flash brilliant neon greens and blues using photonic crystal structures — a dazzling natural defense mechanism to confuse and ward off predators.



The Sea Pen

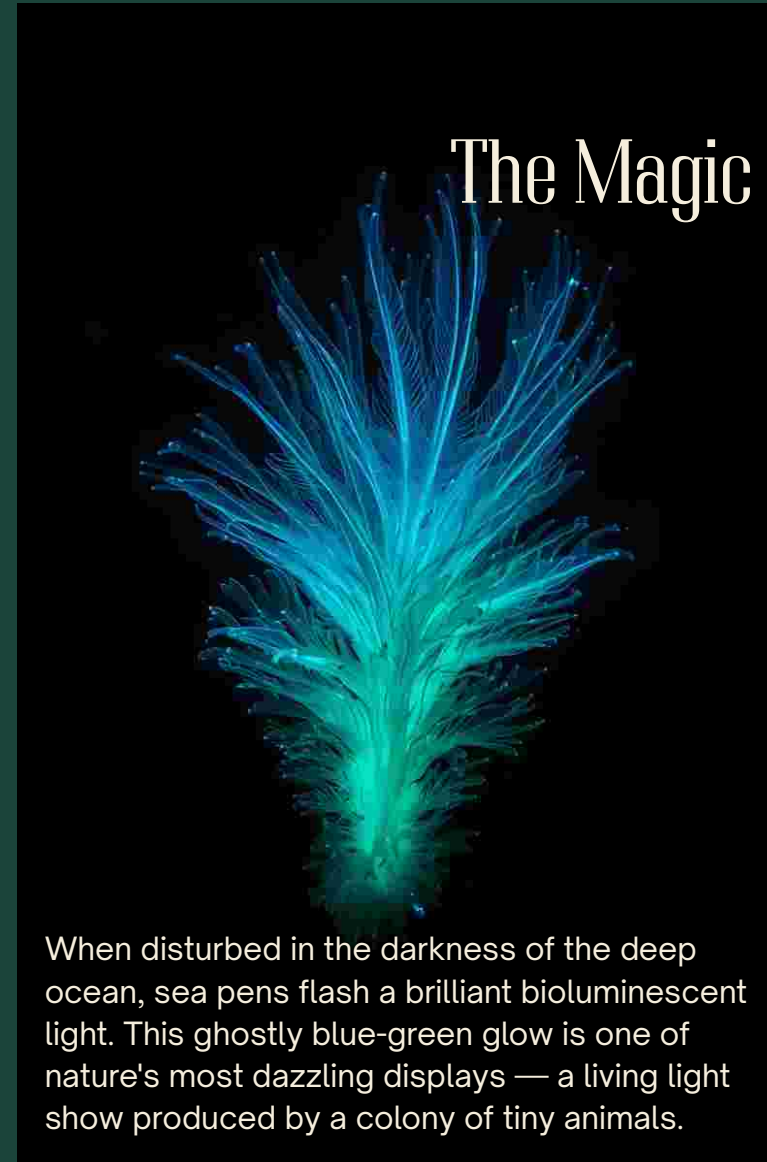
Not a plant, not an object — the Sea Pen is a colony of tiny animals called polyps that grow together in a feather-like form. Found on the dark ocean floor, this remarkable colonial organism resembles an old-fashioned quill pen in shape.

Pen vs. Sea Pen



The Resemblance

Both the ink pen and the sea pen share an elegant, elongated quill-like shape. This striking visual similarity is exactly what inspired early naturalists to give the ocean creature its name



The Magic

When disturbed in the darkness of the deep ocean, sea pens flash a brilliant bioluminescent light. This ghostly blue-green glow is one of nature's most dazzling displays — a living light show produced by a colony of tiny animals.

FEATHER VS. SEA FEATHER.

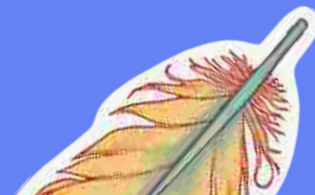


Catching plankton

Sea Feathers use dozens of fern-like arms to catch drifting plankton from ocean currents — not wind!

Animals, not plants!

Despite looking like delicate underwater plants, Feather Stars are animals. They can actually detach from surfaces and swim away using their elegant, waving arms.



Night Star vs. Sea Star

One burns billions of miles away in space; the other navigates the ocean floor. Two very different "stars" — connected only by their shape and name.



BIOLOGY

Sea Stars are fascinating echinoderms unlike any other creature. They have no brain and no blood — instead, they use a unique water vascular system, pumping seawater through their bodies to power movement.

ABILITIES

Hundreds of tiny tube feet work in unison to help Sea Stars crawl, cling, and hunt. Most remarkably, they can completely regrow a lost arm — a feat of regeneration that continues to amaze scientists.

