



Leafy Seadragon Courting based on Moon Phases

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This study provides an in depth look at the behavior of a mated leafy seadragon pair in managed care during the October to March breeding season. Daily time-lapse videos will be taken and analyzed to plot behavior as a function of the phases of the moon. The behaviors examined are position in the water column, time spent together and apart, number of known mating “interactions” witnessed, and the receptiveness of the male (as quantified by the redness of the tail in color and percentage of the tail that is red). On October 16, 2016 the leafy seadragon female dropped approximately 20 eggs onto the bottom of the tank. Due to the successful development of eggs we will be adding a temperature manipulation component to the study. Temperature manipulation, steadily decreasing the temperature throughout the month then rapidly increasing right before the full moon, will be used to prompt the male to receive the eggs. This research will be used to create a baseline of knowledge about leafy seadragon breeding habits in managed care facilities.

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