

儒艮知多少

Marine Mammals II

儒艮和牠的朋友

儒艮與鯽魚 (Remora spp.) 和幼年無齒鰻 (Gnathanodon spiosus) 分別有互利共生和偏利共生的關係。鯽魚利用頭部的吸盤吸附在這種巨大的海洋哺乳動物身上來獲得保護，同時牠們也清除儒艮身上的寄生蟲或細菌 (互利共生)。當儒艮以海草為食時，本來隱藏在海草床上的小型無脊椎動物會被撥到水中。此時，幼年無齒鰻便可以輕鬆找到獵物 (偏利共生)。

純素食動物？

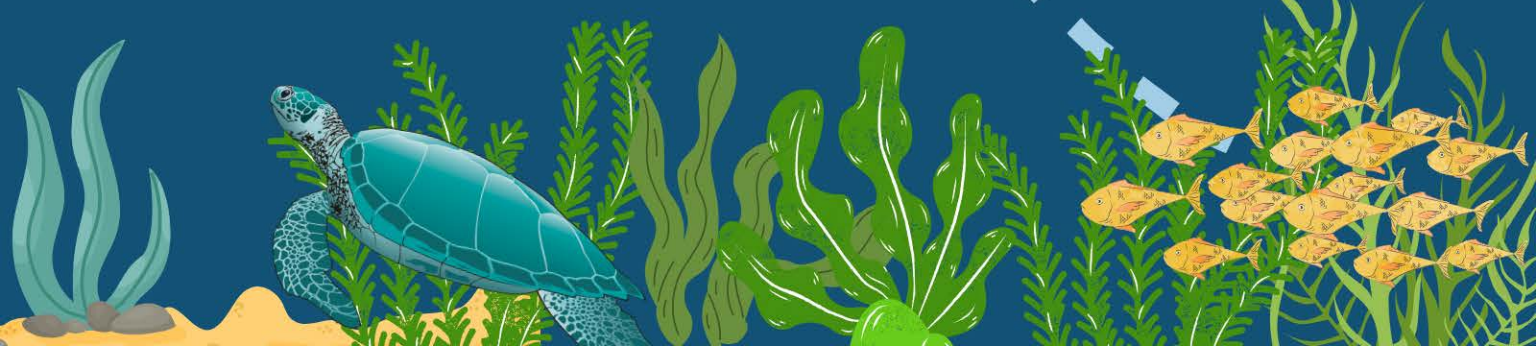
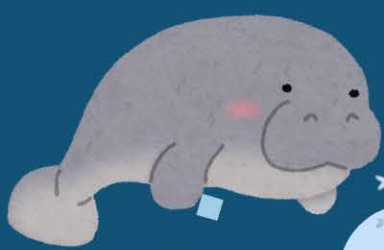
儒艮 (*Dugong dugon*) 的主要食物是海草，但牠們嚴格來說並不是純草食動物。除了主要食喜鹽草屬和二藥藻屬的海草外，儒艮在進食海草時也會吃掉一些小型無脊椎動物。因此，除了被形容為海洋食草動物之外，儒艮也被譽為海草群落專家，以形容牠們除了會食海草之外，也會吃到在海草群落中棲息的其他小型無脊椎動物。

儒艮也懂得打架

儒艮經常表現出類似於「集會場」的交配行為模式。所謂「集會場」是指雄性儒艮在繁衍季節聚集的傳統聚集區，他們在那裡參與各種競爭性的活動和展示，目的是吸引雌性儒艮。雄性儒艮會激烈地捍衛自己的領地，並調整行為以吸引雌性儒艮。在成功吸引到雌性儒艮來到自己的領地後，雄性儒艮會進入一系列的階段，最終達到交配。這種交配行為突出了雄性儒艮在追求繁衍成功方面所採用的獨特策略。

儒艮的威脅

在菲律賓，儒艮經常在捕魚活動中被漁網和魚鉤所傷害。因此，政府制定了各種規管措施來限制非法捕撈行為。另外，海洋污染，包括塑料廢棄物、化學污染物和溢油事故，也對儒艮構成了重大威脅。因此，保護這些瀕危物種的迫切性很高。



More About Dugong

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Dugong and it's friends

Remoras (*Remora spp.*) and juvenile striped golden jacks (*Gnathanodon speciosus*) show an ecological relationship of mutualism and commensalism respectively. Remoras gain protection by sticking onto this huge marine mammal while they also help remove parasites or bacteria on the dugongs. On the other hand, juvenile striped golden jacks can grab a meal easily when the dugong host is feeding on the seagrass as small invertebrates hiding on the seagrass bed are stirred up.

Will dugongs fight?

Dugongs often exhibit a mating behavior akin to lekking. A lek refers to a traditional gathering area where male dugongs assemble during the breeding season to participate in competitive activities and displays that are intended to attract females. Males fiercely defend their territories within the lek, and they dynamically adjust their behavioral displays in an effort to captivate the females. After successfully attracting females to their territory, the male dugongs then proceed through a series of subsequent phases in order to culminate in mating and copulation. This lekking behavior highlights the unique strategies employed by male dugongs in their pursuit of reproductive success.

Strictly Herbivores?

Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) have a main diet of seagrasses, but they are not "strictly" herbivores. Apart from seagrasses, mainly *Halophila spp.* and *Halodule spp.*, small marine macroinvertebrates are also consumed when they are uprooting and grazing on the seagrasses along its way. Therefore, other than marine herbivores, dugongs are also described as seagrass community specialists.

Threats Dugongs face

Dugongs are often hurt by fishing nets and hooks during fishing activities in Philippines. Therefore, the government has different regulations to restrict illegal fishing. Other than that, marine pollution, including plastic waste, chemical contaminants, and oil spills, also poses a significant threat to dugongs. Therefore, there is a high need to protect them!

