



LEAFY SEA DRAGON



This mysterious leafy sea dragon blends so well into the kelp forest – blink and you'll swim right past it! A relative of seahorses, it moves around using two tiny fins near the front of the head. And, just like seahorses, the males are responsible for incubating the eggs and looking after the mini sea dragons – neat! Some say legendary dragons were inspired by these sea beauties moving gracefully in the waves.

Dimensions

50cm (20in) long

Yarns

Paintbox Yarns Cotton DK (100% cotton), 125m (137yds) per 50g (1¾oz) ball:

- **Bright Yellow:** 1 x 50g (1¾oz) ball in Daffodil Yellow (shade 422)
- **Light Yellow:** 1 x 50g (1¾oz) ball in Banana Cream (shade 421)

HOOKS

3mm (US C/2 or D/3) hook

other tools and materials

- Pair 6mm black safety eyes
- Craft pipe cleaner (chenille stem) or wire
- Toy stuffing
- Sewing pins
- Tapestry needle

FUN FACT

The leafy sea dragon has no known predators thanks to its perfect camouflage, protective bony plates and the sharp spines on its side.



Tension (gauge)

Tension is not critical for this project, but if you want to match the pattern shown here, make a small circular swatch using the chosen yarn and hook (see Tools and materials: Tension swatch for the swatch pattern).

When made in DK weight cotton with a 3mm (US C/2 or D/3) hook the swatch should measure 3.5cm (1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in) across.

Project notes

This project explores the use of increases and decreases to create the wobbly line of the sea dragon's body. The leaf-like appendages are added onto the base, with some embroidery to finish.

Head and body

Make 1 in **Bright Yellow** yarn.

Round 1: 6sc in a magic ring. [6]

Round 2: Inc 6 times. [12]

Round 3: Sc in all 12 sts. [12]

Round 4: 3sc, (inc in next st, 1sc) 3 times, 3sc. [15]

Round 5: Sc in all 15 sts. [15]

Round 6: 3sc, inv dec 5 times, 2sc. [10]

Rounds 7–13: Sc in all 10 sts. [7 rounds]

Round 14: Slst in all 10 sts. [10] **(photo 1)**

Round 15: (1sc, inc in next st) 5 times. [15]

Round 16: 9sc, 3sc in next st, 3sc, 3sc in next st, 1sc. [19]

Round 17: 10sc, 3sc in next st, 5sc, 3sc in next st, 1sc. [22] **(photo 2)**

Round 18: 15sc, 3sc in next st, 7sc. [25]

Round 19: 10sc, inv sc3tog, 3sc, 3sc in next st, 3sc, inv sc3tog, 2sc. [23] **(photo 3)**

Round 20: 4sc, inc in next st, 4sc, inv sc3tog, 3sc, 3sc in next st, 3sc, inv sc3tog, 1sc. [22]

Round 21: 15sc, 3sc in next st, 6sc. [24]

Round 22: 16sc, inc in next st, 7sc. [25]

Add safety eyes between the increases on **Rounds 16 and 17**. **(photo 4)**

Round 23: 15sc, inv dec, 1sc, inv dec, 5sc. [23]

Round 24: 14sc, inv dec, 1sc, inv dec, 4sc. [21]

Round 25: 13sc, inv dec, 1sc, inv dec, 3sc. [19]

Round 26: 4sc, inc 2 times, 6sc, inv dec, 1sc, inv dec, 2sc. [19]

Round 27: 5sc, inc 2 times, 6sc, (inv dec, 1sc) 2 times. [19]

Round 28: 6sc, inc 2 times, 6sc, inv dec, 1sc, inv dec. [19]

Add stuffing to the nose and head. **(photo 5)**



Round 29: 7sc, inc 2 times, 7sc, inc in next st, 1sc, inc in next st. [23]

Round 30: 9sc, inc 2 times, 12sc. [25]

Rounds 31–35: Sc in all 25 sts. [5 rounds]

Round 36: Inv dec, 20sc, inv dec, 1sc. [23]

Round 37: Inv dec, 18sc, inv dec, 1sc. [21]

Round 38: Inv dec, 16sc, inv dec, 1sc. [19]

Round 39: Inv dec, 14sc, inv dec, 1sc. [17]

Round 40: Inv dec, 12sc, inv dec, 1sc. [15]

Add stuffing up to this point. **(photo 6)**

Round 41: Inc in next st, 5sc, inc 2 times, 5sc, inc in next st, 1sc. [19]

Round 42: 8sc, inc 2 times, 9sc. [21]

Round 43: 9sc, inc 2 times, 10sc. [23]

Rounds 44–46: Sc in all 23 sts. [3 rounds]

Round 47: 10sc, inv dec 2 times, 9sc. [21]

Round 48: 9sc, inv dec 2 times, 8sc. [19]

Round 49: 8sc, inv dec 2 times, 7sc. [17]

Round 50: Inv dec, 5sc, inv dec 2 times, 6sc. [14]

Add stuffing up to this point and then stuff as you go. **(photo 7)**

Round 51: Inv dec, 12sc. [13]

Round 52: Inv dec, 11sc. [12]

Round 53: Inv dec, 10sc. [11]

Round 54: Inv dec, 9sc. [10]

Round 55: Inv dec, 8sc. [9]

Round 56: Inv dec, 7sc. [8]

Round 57: Sc in all 8 sts. [8]

Round 58: Inv dec, 6sc. [7]

Round 59: Sc in all 7 sts. [7]

Round 60: Inv dec, 5sc. [6]

Rounds 61–70: Sc in all 6sts. [10 rounds]

Fasten off, leaving a tail. Insert a craft pipe cleaner (chenille stem) into the tail of the sea dragon. Thread yarn tail through front loops with tapestry needle and pull tight to close. **(photo 8)**

Large leaves

Make 8 (4 for each side) or more, start in **Bright Yellow** yarn.

Ch13, start 2nd ch from hook, work in the back humps.

Row 1: Sc in all 12 ch, fasten off **Bright Yellow**. [12]

Now work **Row 2A** or **Row 2B** depending on which side the leaf is for.

Attach **Light Yellow** to the first chain, work around both sides.

Row 2A (right side): Ch1, 2slst, 1sc, ch4, start 2nd ch from hook, 3sc along the chain, 3sc along main row, ch5, start 2nd ch from hook, 4sc along the chain, 3sc along main row, ch6, start 2nd ch from hook, (1sc, 1hdc, 3sc) along the chain, 1sc, 1hdc, 1dc, (3dc, 1hdc) into the chain at the end of the main row, working on the other side of the chain 8sc, 4slst. **(photo 9)**

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.



Row 2B (left side): Ch1, 4slst, 8sc, (1hdc, 3dc) into the chain at the end of the main row, working along the other side of the chain 1dc, 1hdc, 1sc, ch6, start 2nd ch from hook, (1sc, 1hdc, 3sc) along the chain, 3sc along main row, ch5, start 2nd ch from hook, 4sc along the chain, 3sc along the main row, ch4, start 2nd ch from hook, 3sc along the chain, (1sc, 2slst) along the main row.

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.

(photo 10)

Medium leaves

Make 4 in **Light Yellow** yarn.

Ch8, start 2nd ch from hook, work in the back hump.

Row 1: 1sc, 2hdc, 1sc, ch3, start 2nd ch from hook, 2sc along the chain, 1sc along main chain, 2slst.

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.

(photo 11)

Small leaves

Make 4 in **Light Yellow** yarn.

Ch6, start 2nd ch from hook, work in the back hump.

Row 1: 1sc, 1hdc, 1sc, 2slst. [5]

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.

(photo 12)

Pectoral fins

Make 2 in **Light Yellow** yarn.

Ch6, start 3rd ch from hook, work in the back hump.

Row 1: 2dc in next ch, 1dc, 2dc in next ch, skip next ch, slst in last ch. [6]

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.

Dorsal fin

Make 1 in **Light Yellow** yarn.

Ch10, start 3rd ch from hook, work in the back hump.

Row 1: (2dc in next ch, 1dc) 3 times, 2dc in each next 2sts. [13]

Fasten off, leaving a tail for sewing.

(photo 13)

Assembly

Arrange the large leaves along the body, sewing them down in pairs: two pairs on the top, two pairs on the bottom. **(photos 14 and 15)**



Sew the dorsal fin to the back. **(photo 16)**

Sew the pectoral fins to either side of the head. **(photo 17)**

Sew one set of small and medium leaves along the tail, the smallest closest to the tip. **(photo 18)**

Sew one set of medium leaves close together at the peak of the head. **(photo 19)**

Sew the last set of small leaves to the underside of the body. **(photo 19)**

Final details

Embroider around the eyes in **Light Yellow**, and decorate the body with stripes if you want to add more details. **(photos 20 and 21)**

