

Why Sunflower Sea Stars are Endangered

“Sunflower sea star” is a type of starfish that is critically endangered. They can be found on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. Juvenile sunflower sea stars start life with only five arms. Although they get up to twenty four arms! So, why are the numbers declining?

The syndrome that their extinction is connected to is linked to warmer ocean conditions in the eastern Pacific Ocean in the last decade. A series of marine heatwaves, beginning about 2013 with a large heatwave known as “The Blob”, have pushed up temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

As time went by, climate change came. It helped to reduce the number of sea stars in the ocean. No one decided to help a lot so that also led to kelp forests disappearing.

As sunflower sea stars declined, they couldn't eat sea urchins which are known to be notorious for destroying kelp and kelp forests.

That is why you only see them on the internet, in museums and in aquariums.