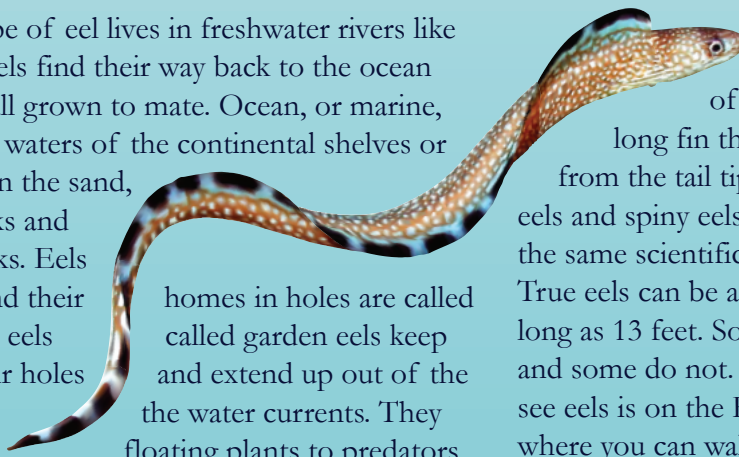


Eel

Baby eels are flat, transparent larvae that float in the ocean and eat **marine snow**, or tiny particles that also float in the water. Eels then go through metamorphosis, or change, into glass eels, then into elvers, and finally adult eels. The term elvers may have come from the springtime “eelfare,” which was a term for the travel elvers took by swimming upstream in the River Thames in England. Elvers will climb up dams and waterfalls to swim upstream. Gertrude Elizabeth Blood, who worked at the fishery in Ballisodare, Ireland, started the custom of helping elvers climb up waterfalls and barriers by supplying grass ladders.

Only one type of eel lives in freshwater rivers like this. The river eels find their way back to the ocean once they are full grown to mate. Ocean, or marine, eels live in deep waters of the continental shelves or shallow waters in the sand, mud, or in cracks and caves in the rocks. Eels are nocturnal and their “eel pits.” Some eels their tails in their holes look like and possible prey that swims by.



homes in holes are called called garden eels keep and extend up out of the the water currents. They floating plants to predators

Eels have been eaten by humans in many cultures. They are now considered a **delicacy**, a rare and special food, and can be very expensive. Some eel farms are not farming the eels responsibly. Greenpeace International, an organization that works for endangered animals, has added eels to the “red list” of fish. The red list helps fish consumers know which fish might become extinct if we eat too much of it. Eels cannot be eaten raw, as cooking helps destroys the toxic protein in their blood. Charles Richet won a Nobel Prize for discovering **anaphylaxis**, a very strong allergic reaction that can cause death, in his research using the toxic protein in eel blood on dogs.

Eels are long fish that look kind of like a snake. They have only one long fin that runs along the top of their bodies from the tail tip to the back of their heads. Electric eels and spiny eels look like eels but are not actually in the same scientific order Anguilliformes as true eels. True eels can be as small as 2 inches in length and as long as 13 feet. Some have spots all over their bodies and some do not. One of the most famous places to see eels is on the French Polynesian island of Huahine, where you can walk across a bridge over a stream with three- to six-foot-long eels swimming in it.

1. **New terms:** See how these three terms are used in the text, and write a definition next to each one.

marine snow tiny particles that float in the ocean

delicacy a rare and special food

anaphylaxis a very strong allergic reaction that can cause death

2. What is the term for the devices used to help elvers climb? grass ladder

3. Garden eels live in gardens on land.

True or **False?**

4. What scientist won a Nobel Prize for discovering anaphylaxis allergic reactions from eel blood toxins?

Charles Richet