

# LONG FINNED EEL - tuna

## Anguilla dieffenbachii

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The long fin eel is endemic to New Zealand. Juvenile eels are neither male or female. As the eel grows and adapts to its habitat, its cells specialize and the eel becomes male or female. This is generally related to the size of the animal, not its age.



IMG 501

### Description

They have long dorsal fins, side fins and yellow bellies. Their mouths are large, with small, sandpaper-like teeth.

### Food

They are carnivorous, eating crustaceans, fish, snails, insects, worms, crayfish, frogs and even small birds!

### Breeding

Research suggests that the breeding location is somewhere near Tonga. Once the eggs hatch into leaf like larvae, they drift on the ocean currents where they change into tiny, semi-transparent eels. They take on a gray-brown colouration, and are then known as elvers. Eventually they settle in a lake, swamp, dam or river.

Adult female eels release around 1–20 million eggs



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*Tēnā te puna kei Hawaiki, the source is at Hawaiki.  
A Māori karakia suggests that the breeding location is somewhere in the Pacific.*



IMG 502