



Shortfin Eel

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Anguilla dieffenbachii

tuna

Size

Females have been known to reach 1.2 m and 3 kg, but males are smaller.

Habitat

Very widespread throughout NZ waterways – streams, rivers, wetlands, especially at low elevations. Longfin eels find cover and hide during the day, becoming active at night.

Feeding Habits

Eels are **carnivores**, eating **macroinvertebrates** when young, and changing to fish and even small birds like ducklings as they get bigger.

Special Features

- Eels are skilled at climbing up waterfalls and can move out of the water too, often travelling overland at night.
- Eels live to a great age, and do not mature until they are 15 years old.

- Once the female matures (at over 30 years) she migrates north into the Pacific. Here she produces millions of eggs which hatch, and the larvae head back to their home rivers. This will take 18 months.
- Shortfin and longfin eels look similar but, apart from fin length, the less firmly muscled longfin's body will produce lots of creases when you bend it.



Typical Size