

American Eel

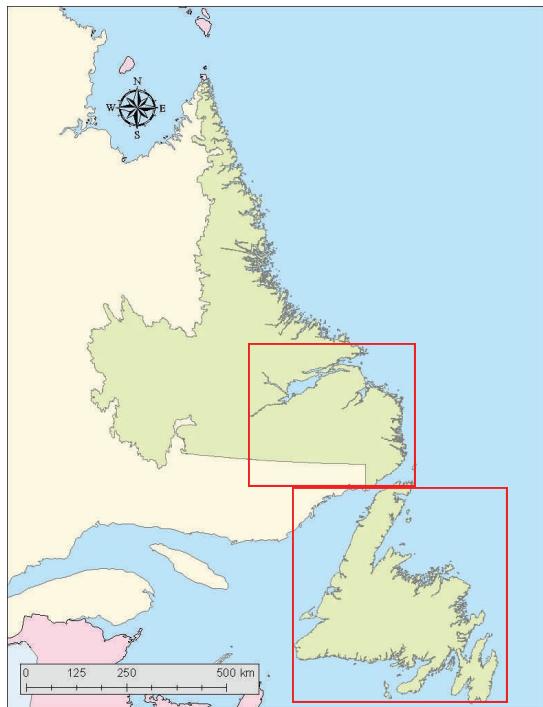
(*Anguilla rostrata*)

- The American eel has a long, snake-like body with a wedge shaped head.
- Females are larger than males and can grow to lengths of 1 meter.
- Eels go through a number of phases during their lifecycle - egg to leptocephali to glass eel to elvers to yellow eels to silver eels.
- The American eel can live for more than 20 years.



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Provincial Distribution



Habitat/ Range

American eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea, in the southern North Atlantic Ocean, but grow and mature in our freshwater rivers, lakes, and estuaries. They have been found in many coastal rivers in Newfoundland and as far north as the English River in Labrador.

Population Trends

A downward trend in the number of American eel counted during surveys has been recorded on the Avalon Peninsula and the west coast of Newfoundland since the late 1980s.

Limiting Factors and Threats

American eel populations are limited by dams that prevent access to upstream habitats and hydroelectric developments that kill migrants moving downstream. They can also be limited by pollutants in the water. Fishing is limited in this Province, and large areas of eel habitat are unfished.

Special Significance

There is a small commercial fishery of American eel in Newfoundland and Labrador. They are an important food source for the Mi'kmaq people of the Maritime Provinces.

You can help protect the American eel:

- Support habitat conservation for all our rare species.
- Be careful not to pollute our ponds, rivers, and lakes.
- Learn something new about a species at risk in Newfoundland and Labrador and tell a friend!

Department of Environment & Conservation

Wildlife Division

Endangered Species & Biodiversity

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