

Year 5: Science

Activity: Explore adaptations of the short-finned eel

Adaptations of the short-finned eel

(image courtesy of Inland Fisheries Service Tasmania)



Cold conditions

In very cold conditions eels will often bury themselves in mud or sand and enter a state of torpor (inactivity) to preserve their energy.

Teeth

Eels are mainly carnivorous and feed on other aquatic animals including fish, insects, crustaceans (yabbies, crabs, shrimps) and frogs.

Food

Eels have a low body temperature and slow metabolism. This means that they can survive for long periods of time without eating.

Snake-like body

They make body waves to swim through the water and cross land.

On land

In damp conditions, eels can survive out of water for short periods of time and they are able to absorb oxygen through their skin

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Adaptations of the short-finned eel

Behavioural adaptations	Physiological adaptations	Structural adaptations
Behavioural adaptations may be learned or instinctive actions that organisms do to survive in their natural habitat.	Physiological adaptations are internal systematic responses to the environment.	Structural adaptations are the physical features of an organism that help it survive in its natural habitat.
In very cold conditions eels may bury themselves in mud/sand	In very cold conditions eels may enter a state of torpor (i.e. inactivity) to preserve energy	Eels are mainly carnivorous and they have teeth to help them eat. They feed on other aquatic animals including fish, insects, crustaceans (yabbies, crabs, shrimps) and frogs.
Eels migrate to warmer waters to breed.	In damp conditions eels can survive out of water for short periods of time and they are able to absorb oxygen through their skin.	Eels have a snakelike body and pectoral fins . They make body waves to swim through the water and cross land.
	Eels have a low body temperature and slow metabolism . This means that they can survive for long periods of time without eating.	