

Freshwater Eels

Includes peacock, moray, spiny, and tiger



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Freshwater eels have an excellent sense of smell but can't see very well. Eels have an elongated, snake-like body and vary in size and coloration. They open their jaws to allow water over their gills for breathing. There are several freshwater eels, including the peacock, moray, spiny, and tiger. Recommended for experienced aquarists.



Is a freshwater eel the right choice for your aquarium?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have room for an appropriate size aquarium.
- I understand eels are not to be hand-fed.
- I am an experienced aquarist.
- I can commit to providing proper care for this freshwater eel.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this freshwater eel.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a freshwater eel may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a freshwater eel and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible aquarium care.

Average Size 1 to 3 feet long, some species can grow longer

Life Span Depends on species

Diet Most eels are carnivorous

Feed fish or invertebrates, depending upon whether the eel has teeth

Feeding Feed once or twice weekly, depending on size, usually in the evening

Some have teeth to crush their prey

Some may refuse food and eat only every two to three weeks

Housing A well-sealed aquarium lid is mandatory because eels can easily escape

Maintain a low light environment because of poor vision

Freshwater eels need a strong filtration system

Provide hiding places and plenty of room to swim

Some species may require a brackish environment

Water temperature should range from 72° F. to 82° F.

Stable water quality, water temperature and pH levels are critical to the health of eels. If you are unsure of your water quality or pH levels, PETCO provides free water testing.

Recommended Supplies

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate aquarium | <input type="checkbox"/> Aquarium cover | <input type="checkbox"/> Net and Filter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water conditioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate food | <input type="checkbox"/> Décor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water test kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdued lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Airstone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer | <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Air pump |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about freshwater eels or aquariums | | <input type="checkbox"/> Heater |

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Characteristics Freshwater eels are usually sedentary
They tend to be nocturnal and live in holes or caves
Reproduction is difficult in an aquarium setting

Habitat Maintenance Check filter, other equipment, and water temperature daily
Check water quality every week
Change 10–25% of the total volume of water every two to four weeks, or as needed
Check all aquarium openings to prevent escape
Introduce new fish gradually to aquarium

Compatibility Do not house with small, slow-swimming species
May become aggressive in an overcrowded aquarium

- Signs of a Healthy Eel**
- Even coloring
 - Clear eyes
 - Healthy appetite
 - Clean in appearance

Common Health Issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Ich	White spots appear on body and fins; eel rubs against hard objects or swims awkwardly	Quarantine eel immediately; use a commercial Ich remedy for at least two weeks

- Signs of Illness**
- Loss of color or appetite
 - Spots or fungus on body or mouth
 - Listlessness

If you notice any of these signs, test water quality and improve as necessary

Preventing Common Health Issues Avoid crowded conditions; they are a major cause of stress and disease
Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration

Sources *Dr. Axelrod's Atlas of Freshwater Aquarium Fishes* by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod, et al.
Peterson Field Guides: Freshwater Fish by Lawrence M. Page and Brooks M. Burr
Tropical Fish: Setting Up and Maintaining Freshwater and Marine Aquaria by Reginald Dutta

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.