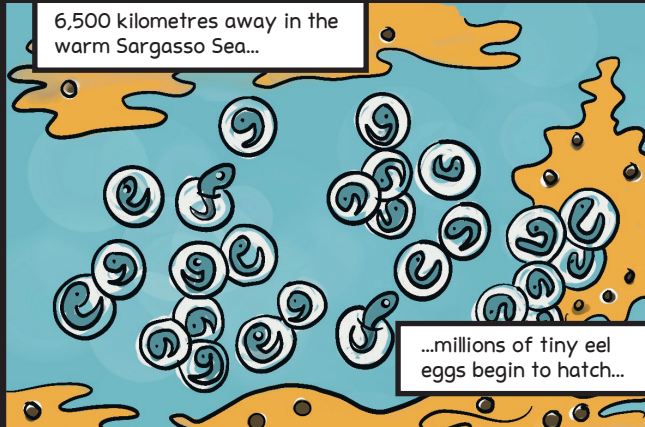


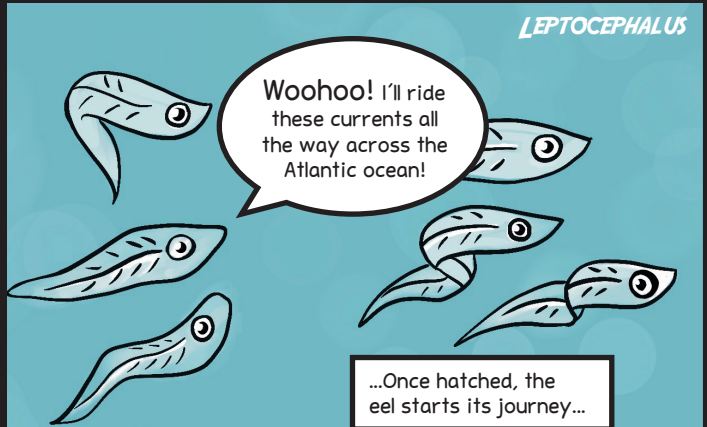
# THE EELY AMAZING EUROPEAN EEL LIFE CYCLE

6,500 kilometres away in the warm Sargasso Sea...



...millions of tiny eel eggs begin to hatch...

LEPTOCEPHALUS



Woohoo! I'll ride these currents all the way across the Atlantic ocean!

...Once hatched, the eel starts its journey...

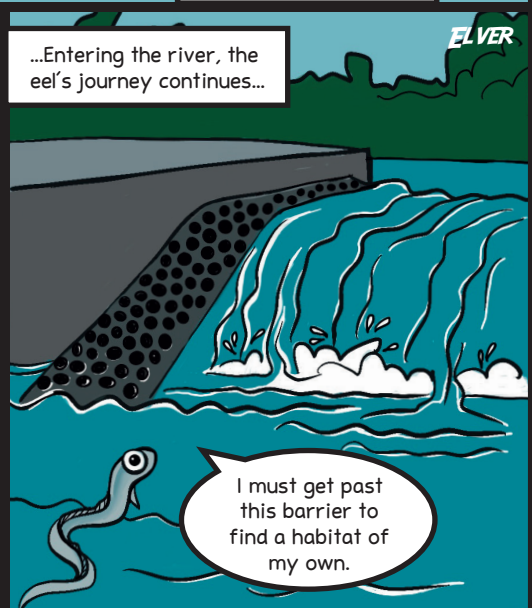
...Eventually the tiny eel reaches the British Isles and enters the Thames Estuary...



The water here is changing, from salty to freshwater - I must be nearing my new home!

GLASS EEL

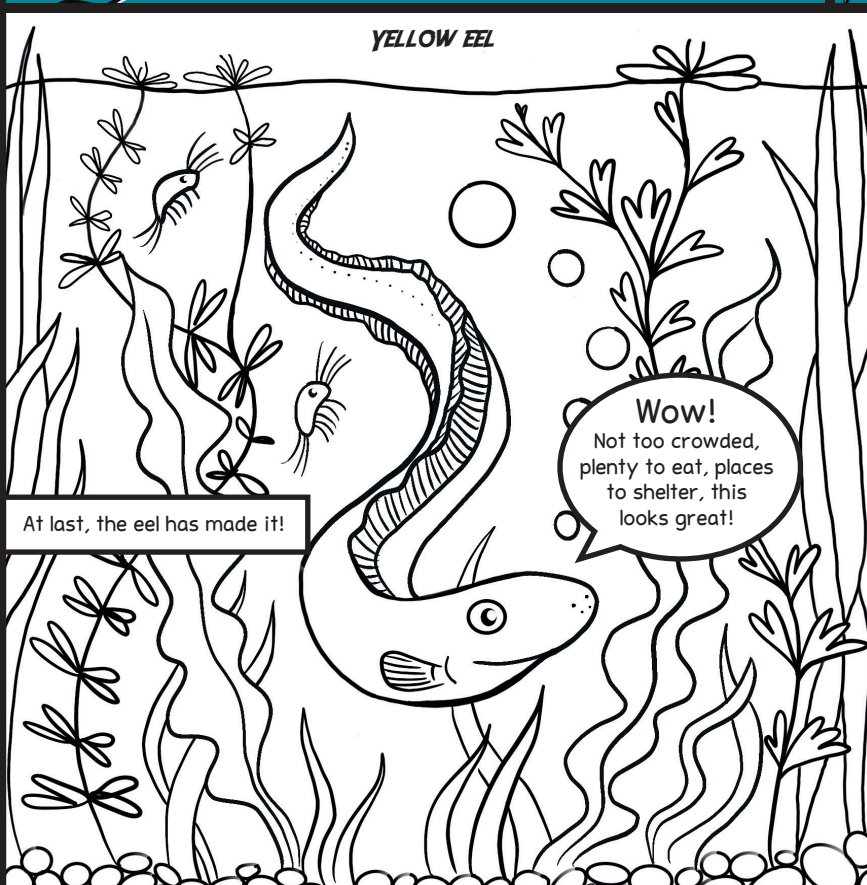
...Entering the river, the eel's journey continues...



ELVER

I must get past this barrier to find a habitat of my own.

YELLOW EEL



At last, the eel has made it!

Wow! Not too crowded, plenty to eat, places to shelter, this looks great!

SILVER EEL

Many years later...



Time to start my journey all the way back to the Sargasso Sea to lay some eggs of my own.

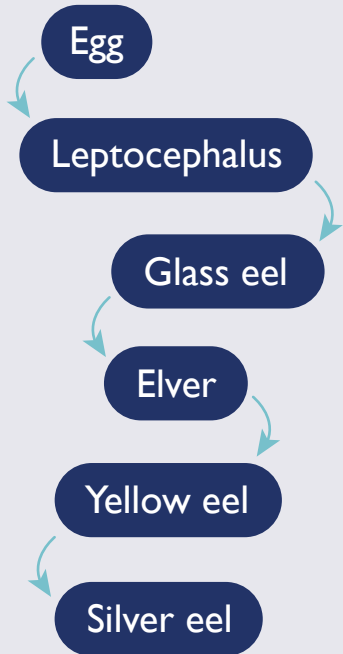
Colour in the yellow eel and river habitat!



# Thames Catchment Community Eels Project



## European eel life cycle stages



## Glossary

**Barrier** An obstacle that prevents access.

**British Isles** A collection of over 6,000 islands, of which Great Britain is the largest. You live in England, which is part of Great Britain.

**Current** A continuous, directed movement of ocean water that flows in one of the earth's oceans.

**Eel** A long and slippery fish.

**Eel pass** A man made 'eel ladder', fixed in rivers where there are barriers to enable eels to pass and continue their journey up the river to find suitable habitats.

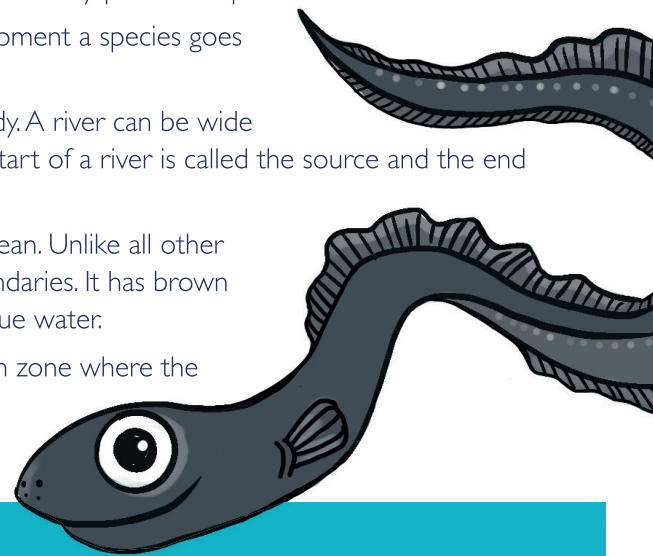
**Habitat** Shelter, water, food, and space used by particular species.

**Life cycle** A series of stages of development a species goes through during its life time.

**River** A natural and flowing water body. A river can be wide or narrow and deep or shallow. The start of a river is called the source and the end of a river is called the mouth.

**Sargasso Sea** A sea in the Atlantic Ocean. Unlike all other regions called seas, it has no land boundaries. It has brown Sargassum seaweed and often calm blue water.

**Thames Estuary** The watery transition zone where the North Sea meets and mixes with the River Thames.



## How to help the Critically Endangered European eel

Eels can spend most of their lives in our rivers. Eels need 'healthy river habitat', so lots of unpolluted and flowing water, along with places to hide, food and space.

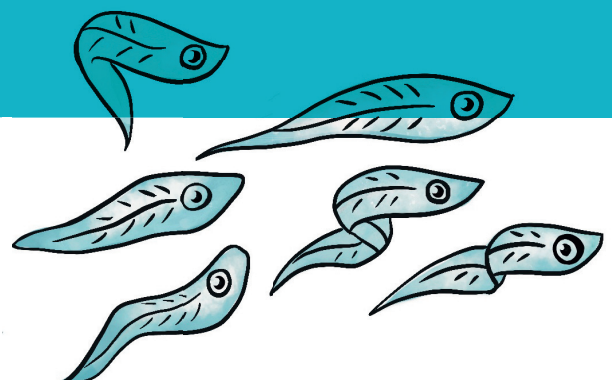
Don't throw litter into your river; use a bin or take rubbish home.

Try to avoid single use plastics. Lots of plastic ends up in our rivers and causes pollution. It breaks down into microplastics that can get eaten by wildlife.

Use less water. The more water we all use, the less that is left for our rivers. Always drink plenty of water; but think about ways to reduce water usage. For example, turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

Thames Catchment Community Eels project is a partnership, led by Thames Rivers Trust with Action for the River Kennet, South East Rivers Trust and Thames21. We are working together to aid the long-term survival of the European eel. Through new citizen science monitoring we will be collecting and analysing robust data, to be used for strategic decisions for future eel recovery projects.

Through education and engagement with local schools and communities we are raising the profile of this Critically Endangered fish.



## Green Recovery Challenge Fund



For more information, including more educational resources visit [www.thamesriverstrust.org.uk](http://www.thamesriverstrust.org.uk)