

TUNA FACTS

Tuna kuwharuwharu (Te Reo Māori for longfin eel) are a very important taonga for tangata whenua. They were an important source of kai, knowledge and seen as kaitiaki of our streams, rivers and lakes. Historical & current pressures on tuna, such as over fishing and habitat loss, have resulted in their decline.

1 BIGGEST FRESHWATER EEL

Longfin eel are the biggest freshwater eel in the world and are our top freshwater predator. Males grow up to 1m long. Females can grow to 2m in length!

2 ONLY IN NEW ZEALAND

Are endemic - found nowhere else in the world.

3 SUPER SENSE OF SMELL

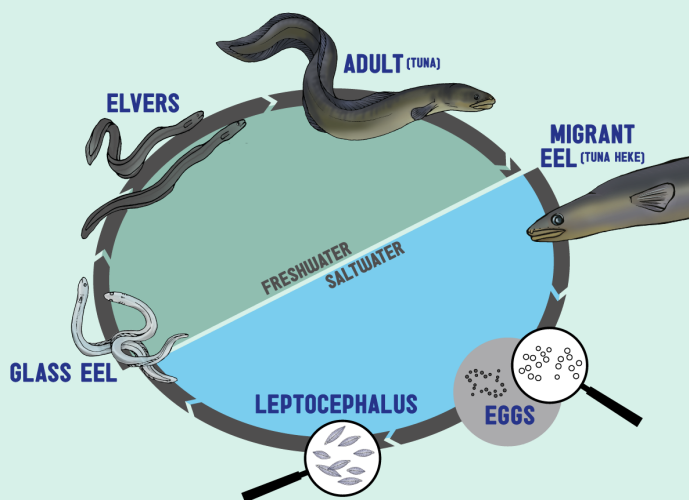
Tuna have bad eyesight but an amazing sense of smell (their nostrils stick out from the end of their nose).

4 NIGHT FEEDERS

Come out at night to feed on insect larvae, snails, fish, kōura, dead animals and birds.

5 AMAZING LIFE STORY

Longfin eels have an amazing lifecycle (see above), they can live 60-100 years!



Click [here](#) for a more in-depth look into this amazing life cycle.

6 BACKWARDS TEETH

Tuna have small rows of small sharp teeth that point backwards

7 SLIMY SKIN

Tuna have slime that helps them to breed and protects their skin out of water. They produce more slime when stressed and absorb 50% of their oxygen through their skin.

8 CRAFTY CLIMBERS

Young eels are called elvers and some can climb 40 metre high obstacles!