

Zig-zag eel

The zigzag eel, also known as the tire-track eel or the leopard eel, is a freshwater eel species found in Southeast Asia, including India. Its name comes from the distinctive pattern of spots and stripes that runs along its body, resembling the markings on a tire track. The zigzag eel is a popular aquarium fish due to its unique appearance and interesting behavior. It is a nocturnal species and spends most of its time hiding in the substrate, coming out at night to feed on small invertebrates and insect larvae. Although they can reach up to 20 inches in length in the wild, in captivity, they typically grow up to around 10 inches. While there is limited information available on the conservation status of the zigzag eel in the wild, sustainable captive breeding and responsible ownership of these fish can help to ensure their long-term survival.

Serial No.	Characteristics	Description
1.	Common name	Zig-zag eel
2.	Scientific name	Mastacembelus armatus
3.	Colour	Dark brown or black with a lighter underbelly
4.	Average length in m	Can grow up to 0.6 meters in length
5.	Average weight in kgs	Can weigh up to 1 kilogram
6.	Found in river systems of	Found in freshwater rivers and streams in South and Southeast Asia
7.	Habitat	Prefers shallow, rocky areas with fast-moving water

8.	Any special characteristics	Has a long, snake-like body with a pointed snout and distinctive zig-zag pattern on its back
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Features

The Zig-zag eel, also known as the Snake eel or the Peppered moray eel, is a type of freshwater fish that belongs to the family Muraenidae.

The Zig-zag eel has a long and slender body, which can reach up to 3 feet (1 meter) in length. Its skin is covered with small, dark spots that give it a peppered or speckled appearance. The eel has a pointed snout and sharp teeth, which it uses to capture prey.

The Zig-zag eel is generally brown or grey in color, with a pattern of lighter and darker spots on its skin. It may also have yellow or greenish tints on its head and fins.

The weight of a Zig-zag eel can vary depending on its size and age. Adult eels can weigh up to 4 pounds (2 kilograms). The Zig-zag eel is not known for its swimming speed, as it usually moves slowly and stealthily along the sea bottom. However, when threatened or chasing prey, it can move quite quickly.

Like most eels, the Zig-zag eel is primarily nocturnal, and spends much of the day hiding in its burrow or crevice. At night, it emerges to hunt for small fish, crabs, and other invertebrates. The eel is solitary and territorial and may be aggressive towards other eels or fish that encroach on its space.

Habitat

It inhabits slow-moving or still waters such as rivers,

streams, swamps, and marshes in Southeast Asia, including India. They prefer areas with a lot of vegetation or other hiding places such as rocks, logs, and crevices in the substrate, as they are primarily nocturnal and spend most of their time hiding during the day. These eels are also known to inhabit lowland rice fields and floodplains during the wet season, where they can find plenty of prey to feed on. In captivity, it's essential to provide them with a suitable habitat that mimics their natural environment, including soft sand or mud substrate, plenty of hiding places, and water that is slightly acidic and free from pollutants.

River System

Zigzag eels are found in the freshwater river systems of India, primarily in the northeastern region of the country. They are known to inhabit the Brahmaputra River basin, which covers parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as other river systems in the region, including the Barak River, the Surma River, and the Imphal River. These eels prefer slow-moving or still waters with dense vegetation or other hiding places, such as rocks or logs, where they can find shelter during the day and come out to feed at night. However, it's important to note that their distribution and habitat preferences may vary depending on the species.

Threatened Status

they have been listed as "Least Concern" by the IUCN. This suggests that the Zigzag eel may also be relatively common and widespread in its natural range, although more research is needed to determine its population status and distribution. Nevertheless, the threat of habitat destruction and overfishing in some parts of its range highlights the importance of sustainable management and conservation efforts to protect this species and its habitat.