

marine eel

care sheet



Marine eels have an excellent sense of smell but can't see very well. Eels have an elongated, snakelike body and vary in size and coloration. They open their jaws to allow water over their gills for breathing. A popular marine eel is the snowflake moray eel. Recommended for experienced aquarists.

facts

average adult size:	1 to 6+ feet long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	carnivore
minimum aquarium size:	50+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature	72 to 78°F
specific gravity:	1.020 to 1.025



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

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced marine eel diet consists of:

- Frozen silversides, krill, shrimp or other carnivorous frozen options, and freeze-dried krill.
- Squid can be given occasionally as a special meal.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your marine eel:

- Feed once or twice a day usually in the evening.
- Use caution when feeding; lower food with feeding tongs.
- Thaw frozen food before feeding.

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; a well-sealed aquarium lid is recommended because eels can easily escape. Provide hiding places large enough for an eel to fit inside.
- **Stable water quality and parameters are critical to the health of aquatic life. If you are unsure of your water quality, Petco provides free water testing.**

normal behavior

- Usually marine eels are

communal and sedentary.

- They tend to be nocturnal and live in holes and caves.
- Marine eels have a reputation as vicious hunters, but are usually harmless to humans if handled properly.
- Will eat small fish and invertebrates.

habitat maintenance

- **Daily:** Check filter, water temperature, specific gravity and other equipment.
- **Weekly:** Check water quality at least once a week.
- **Monthly:** Change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks, or as needed.

Introduce new inhabitants to the aquarium gradually.

- Compatible with certain species of puffers, triggers and angelfish. Don't house with small, slow-swimming species. May become aggressive in an overcrowded aquarium.

signs of a healthy eel

- Clear eyes
- Healthy appetite
- **Avoid overcrowded conditions, which are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.**

housing

red flags

- Loss of color or appetite
- Spots or fungus on body or mouth
- Erratic swimming
- Labored respiration
- Weight loss
- Cloudy eyes

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

compatibility

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Marine ich	Cysts on fins, gills and skin; labored respiration, excess skin mucus or pale skin.	Treat entire aquarium with a commercial parasite remedy and improve water quality; freshwater dips can dislodge the parasites.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Marine aquarium salt
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Protein skimmer (recommended)
- Marine substrate
- Heater
- Hydrometer
- Book about marine eels

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on marine eels and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all aquatic life are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Atypical Mycobacterium* and *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your aquatic life or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for aquatic life and should consider not having aquatic life as a pet.

Go to [cdc.gov/healthypets](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](https://www.petco.com/caresheet) for more information about aquatic life and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the needs of other species. Go to [petco.com](https://www.petco.com) for more information.

