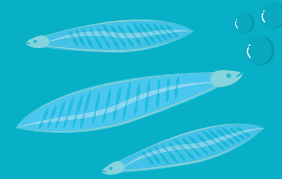


The next stage of their journey is a long swim all the way to deep trenches near Tonga in the Pacific Ocean. They meet up with all the other migrating longfin eels and spawn (lay and fertilise eggs) and then they die.



The eggs hatch into tiny babies called *Leptocephalis* and drift all the way back to New Zealand in currents on their own. By the time they arrive they look like mini eels but are see-through and known as glass eels.



Glass eels make their way through our estuaries into our rivers where they start to get bigger and darker and we start calling them elvers.



LONGFIN EEL

• Life Cycle •

After living in New Zealand's lakes, rivers and wetlands for between 32 and 60 years (some live for over 100 years!) The female eels start to change... Their head becomes thinner, their eyes double in size and then the mature eels migrate down to our estuaries.

elvers continue migrating through our freshwater environments and eventually find a place to settle down and grow into adult eels feeding on insects, snails, fish and koura...

