



American Eel *Anguilla rostrata*

<http://www.cnr.vt.edu/efish/families/anguillidae.html>

Characteristics

- **slender, snakelike body; small, pointed head**
- **long dorsal fin** continuous with caudal and anal fins (a) ; note lamprey dorsal fin extends for less than half of the body
- **small, single gill slit** just in front of pectoral fin; compare to lamprey gill openings
- **pelvic fins absent**
- **lower jaw projects beyond upper jaw**, jaws filled with numerous small teeth

Ecology and Distribution

- **catadromous** (spawns in Atlantic; elvers migrate into freshwaters)
- **occurs in permanent streams with continuous flow**; hides during the day in undercut banks and in deep pools near logs and boulders
- **historically found throughout entire Mississippi River drainage, including French Creek watershed**; dams in the Mississippi might limit dispersal