

Read the following article and answer the questions.

## The Eel's Incredible Journey



Have you ever seen a fish that looks like a snake? If so, you have probably seen an eel. Unlike snakes, eels have **fins** and breathe with **gills** instead of lungs.

The Hudson **River** and other waters in New York are home to the American eel, but it is not born here. Its birthplace is in the Sargasso Sea, part of the Atlantic Ocean southeast of Bermuda. From the Sargasso Sea, ocean **currents** carry baby eels to the coast of North America. This trip takes many months.

At first, baby eels look like bits of clear tape a few inches long. As the young fish leave the ocean currents and swim towards the coast, their bodies become more like pieces of spaghetti. However, they remain **transparent** and are called glass eels. Only the tiny black beads of their eyes and their red gills are easily seen.



Glass eels

Some eels stay in **salt water** and live in **bays** and **marshes** along the coast. Others swim up rivers to live in **freshwater habitats**. Soon after arriving in these new habitats, green, brown, or yellow colors begin to appear on their bodies. At this point they are called **elvers**.



American eels may live in bays, rivers, and **streams** for twenty years or more. But when the time comes to **spawn** (lay eggs), they undergo another change. Their eyes grow larger, and their color becomes more silvery. These silver eels swim **downstream** and out to sea, journeying back to the Sargasso Sea. There they complete their life cycle by spawning and then dying.

For centuries, the location where eels were born was a mystery. Even today, no one has ever seen eels spawning in the Sargasso Sea. Matter of fact, no adult eels or eggs have been found there. So how do we know that this is where eels are born? **Scientists** have used nets with very fine mesh to capture young eels all over the Atlantic Ocean. The very smallest ones—eels that have just hatched—are caught in the Sargasso Sea.

1. This article is **mostly about**
  - a. the Sargasso Sea.
  - b. the life cycle of the American eel.
  - c. different shapes of fish.
  - d. glass eels.
  
2. Based on the article, when an eel's color turns silvery, the fish is ready to
  - a. migrate from the Sargasso Sea to the coast of North America.
  - b. become an elver.
  - c. migrate to the Sargasso Sea to spawn.
  - d. swim up rivers into fresh water.
  
3. Scientists know that eels **spawn** in the Sargasso Sea because
  - a. that is where the smallest baby eels are found.
  - b. silver eels have been caught there.
  - c. eel eggs have been found there.
  - d. elvers have been seen there.
  
4. According to the article, which of the following statements are true?
  - a. The American eel is a kind of snake. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. American eels live in both fresh and salt water. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Some American eels live for more than twenty years. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Glass eels are brown, green, or yellow in color. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Do you know of any other fish that **migrate**?

