

## Eels.

The eel lays its eggs like most other fishes, and, like the Pacific salmon and the lamprey, it only spawns once and then dies. The quantity of eggs it deposits amount to many millions to each female. The spawning only takes place in the sea, the influence of which is necessary for the development of their reproductive organs; the male fish is only taken in salt or brackish water; the female resides in fresh water until it descends to spawn; and the young eel always ascends from the sea to the rivers and lakes. That eels only spawn once and then die is proven, 1st, by the fact that no mature or adult fish are known to ascend the rivers at any time, and, 2nd, because the commercial fishing can and is, only carried on when the female is descending to the sea; that being a fact recognized since the time of Aristotle. The eel is four years old when it spawns. The male is very much smaller than the female in size. Migrating eels, like some other fishes, abstain from eating during the spawning period. Eels of 4 inches in length in May, reach 10 inches by the end of October and are then as thick as one's little finger. In the following fall they measure 20 to 24 inches, and in the third year are ready to be eaten. In France it is said the young when they first appear at the river's mouth only weigh one pound to 1500 to 1700 eels. Two pounds of live young eels in 5 years will yield 5000 pounds of the matured animal. On this account the breeding of eels has been found to be a very remunerative business.