

# NOT WANTED



**ASIAN SWAMP EEL**  
**ALIAS: *MONOPTERUS ALBUS***

**Distribution:** Native to Southeast Asia.  
Established in Florida.

**Size:** Up to nearly 1 meter (3 feet) long and about 1 pound.

**Description:** The swamp eel has an elongate or snake-like body with no noticeable scales or fins. The head is relatively short and the teeth are small and not easily seen. The body and head are dark, sometimes dark olive or brown above, but lighter, often light orange below. Some individuals are brightly colored with yellow, black, and gold spots over a light tan or almost-white background.

**Impacts to Aquatic Ecosystem:** Nocturnal predators. Eats a variety of animals including crayfish, shrimp, worms, frogs, tadpoles, and other fishes. Can live out of water for a long period of time, can withstand temperatures below freezing, and can survive weeks without food. They are highly adaptable and can breathe atmospheric oxygen and in addition can achieve up to 25% of respiration cutaneously (through the skin). The Asian swamp eel has characteristics that make it very adaptable to a new environment. It has the potential to become widespread in the U.S. and impact a variety of native aquatic and wetland species, and eventually entire ecosystems.

**Means of Introduction:** Possibly escaped from aquarium or from fish farm/market release.

**Status in Maryland:** Currently not in Maryland.



**Look-A-Likes:** Asian swamp eels may be confused with the native American eel.

**Legal Standing:** Prohibited from import, transport, sale, purchase and possession in Maryland.

\*Special provisions for delivering specimens to authorities, visit [www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives).

For more information on invasive species in Maryland visit [www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives).

