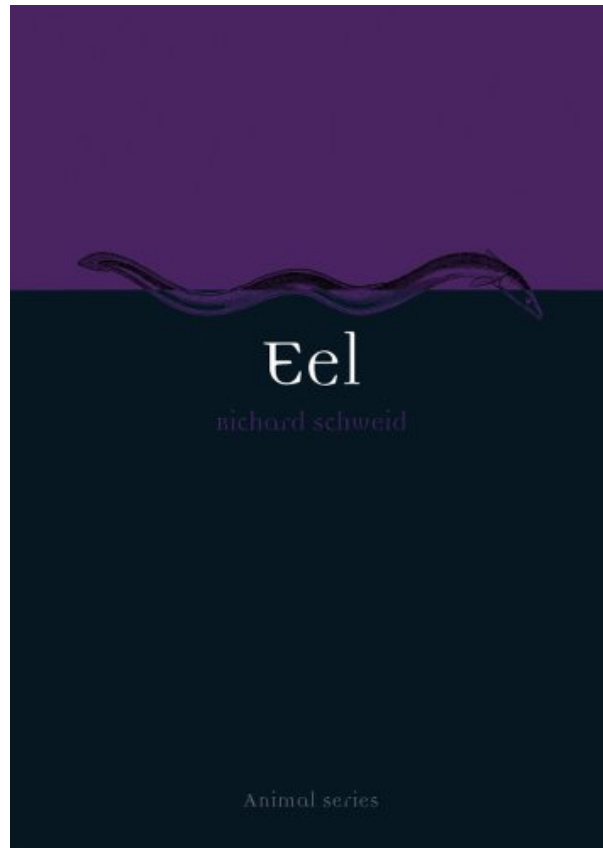
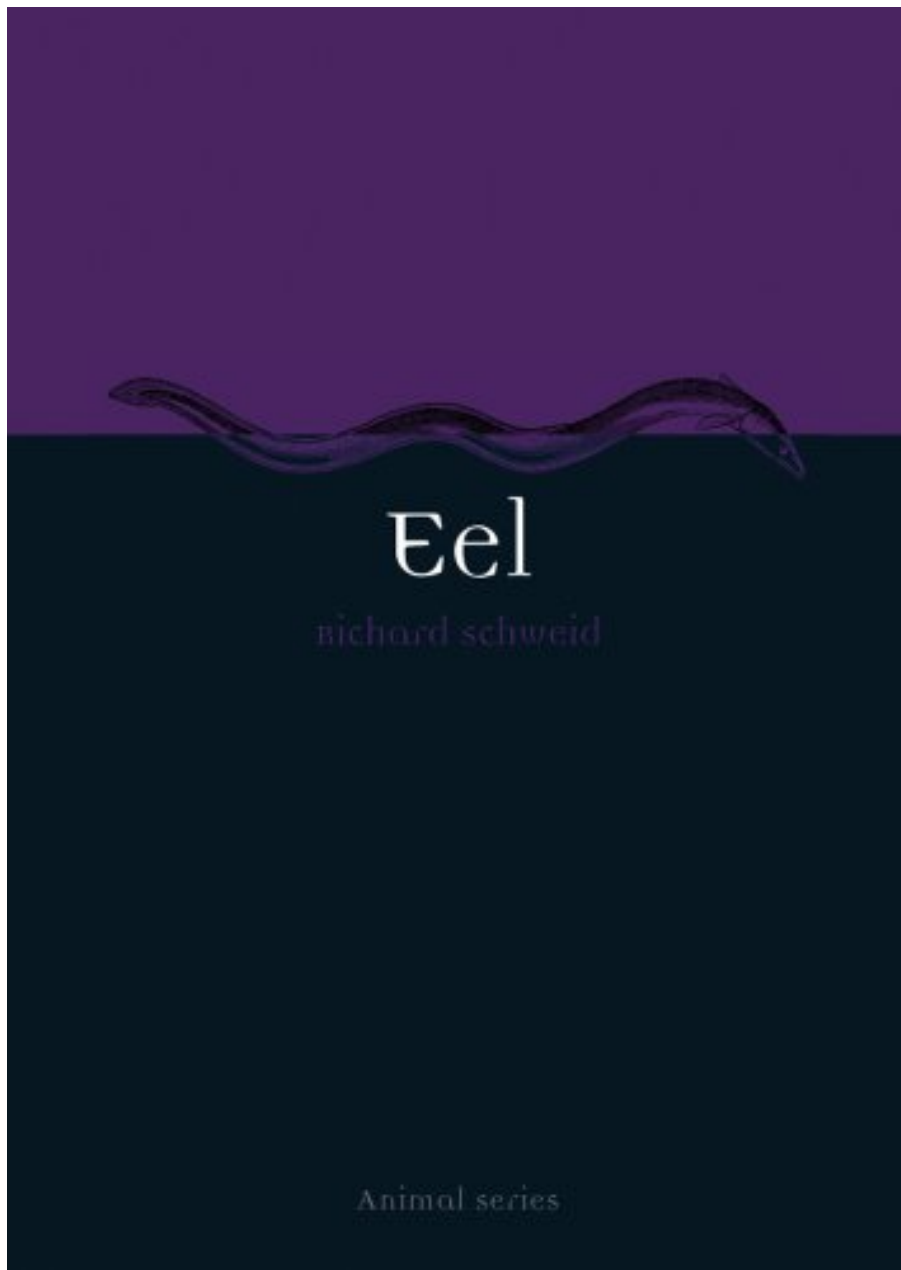


EEL (ANIMAL) BY RICHARD SCHWEID



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Review

"Where Schweid excels in in his wonderfully illustrated historical account of the use that man has made of the eel, a story that extends from prehistory . . . to the gross abuse of the eel resource at the hand of global markets and intensive aquaculture. *Eel* is a book to be enjoyed and often reread, a social history of real substance which echoes the best of Victorian writing." –Times Literary Supplement

(TLS)

"This pretty little book tells you all you could wish to know about the natural history and the culinary history of this delicious, disappearing fish." – Paul Levy, Wall Street Journal

(WSJ)

About the Author

Richard Schweid is senior editor of Barcelona Metropolitan magazine, and the author of many books, including *Consider the Eel*; *Che's Chevrolet*, *Fidel's Oldsmobile*; and *Hereafter*.

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Although it might seem the most mundane of fish when pulled from the mud of creeks, ponds, rivers or the sea, the eel's life cycle is one of the most remarkable on the planet. Freshwater eels are born, according to current scientific theory, in remote ocean depths, and journey thousands of miles to fresh water where they spend their lives, before returning to the ocean to mate and die. A favourite food for humans since antiquity, feeding London's poor during the Middle Ages, and saving the Mayflower pilgrims from starvation on North America's shore, these days the Japanese alone account for an eel consumption worth over a billion pounds a year.

Richard Schweid chronicles these creatures in all their aspects: their natural history to their market value; their occurrence in art and literature; and their present threatened status. The eel is considered by many to be currently on the road to extinction, and despite repeated attempts to farm them, and the expenditure of huge amounts of time and money, eels have steadfastly refused to reproduce successfully in captivity, apparently requiring the vastness of the open ocean to begin their long drift toward maturity.

Containing many little-known facts about this rather surprising fish, this book will appeal to anyone who enjoys well-written natural history, or who wants to learn more about an animal that deserves much more attention than it has received to date.

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Seen by many people as slimy and nasty, this book will make you understand them better, if not an eel fancier.

By lyndonbrecht

An informative book about a creature that most Americans seem to regard as slimy and nasty. We have forgotten that eels were once common fare for our colonial ancestors, until many thousands of dams (for mills and other purposes) blocked migration. This book is excellently illustrated.

The book covers only American and European eels (there aren't many books on eels, so I have no knowledge about Pacific eels). Schweid brings in natural history but perhaps more, the eel as food and subject in literature and art (think of those Dutch still lifes featuring game and fish), and in culture. That may seem like a joke, the eel in culture, but read the book and you'll see it perhaps more seriously.

Eels seem to be in trouble. They are in some ways still a bit mysterious. Readers with some background may remember that for a very long time no one knew where eels went when they migrated out to sea. One issue I was unaware of is the sale of glass eels (baby eels coming into fresh water) to Chinese eel farms. Eels have not been successfully raised from eggs.

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