

**Lesser sand eel**

*Ammodytes tobianus*

Order: *Perciformes*

Family: *Ammodytidae*

External appearance

The lesser sea eel is most often yellowish brown with a white belly. In the Baltic Sea it can reach a length of 20 cm. It is similar in appearance to the greater sand eel. In the field, the two fish can be distinguished by opening the mouth – the lesser sand eel’s mouth forms a funnel.

Distribution

Found along the coasts and in the seas of the northeastern Atlantic Ocean. It is found in all coastal waters of the Baltic Sea.

Diet

Juvenile lesser sea eels feed on zooplankton. Adult lesser sand eels also feed on zooplankton as their main food source, but will eat small crustaceans as well.

Development

In the Baltic Sea, spawning takes place in June and August. The eggs are oval and are deposited in small mounds on the sand. The larvae are pelagic.

Fishing

The lesser sand eel is not of commercial fishing importance. As with the greater sand eel, it is used as bait by anglers and fishermen.

Interesting facts

The lesser sand eel is an important fish in the coastal ecosystem; it is a food source for coastal predatory fish as well as water birds and seals. Lesser sand eels spend most of the daylight hours burrowed in the sand.