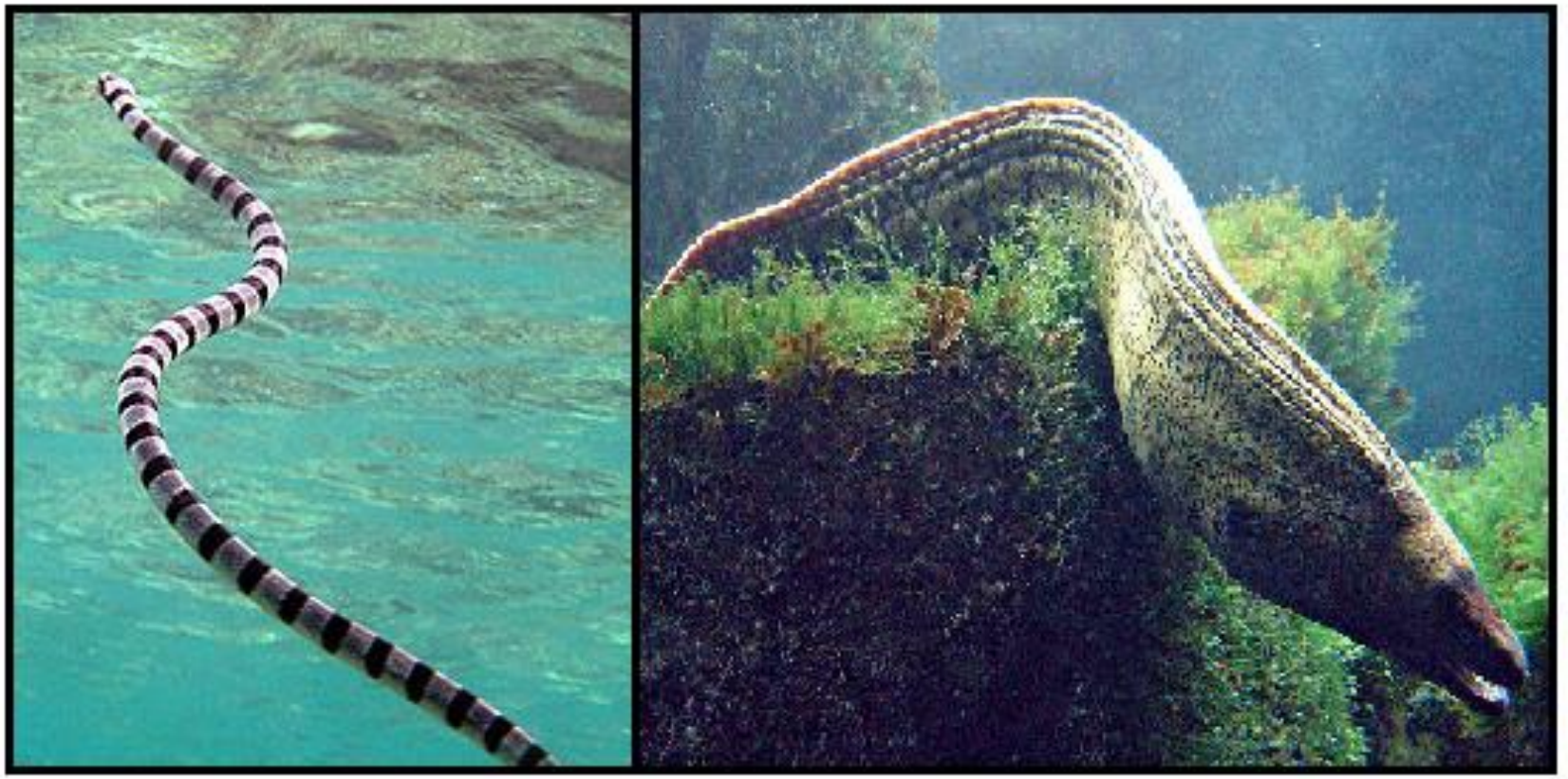
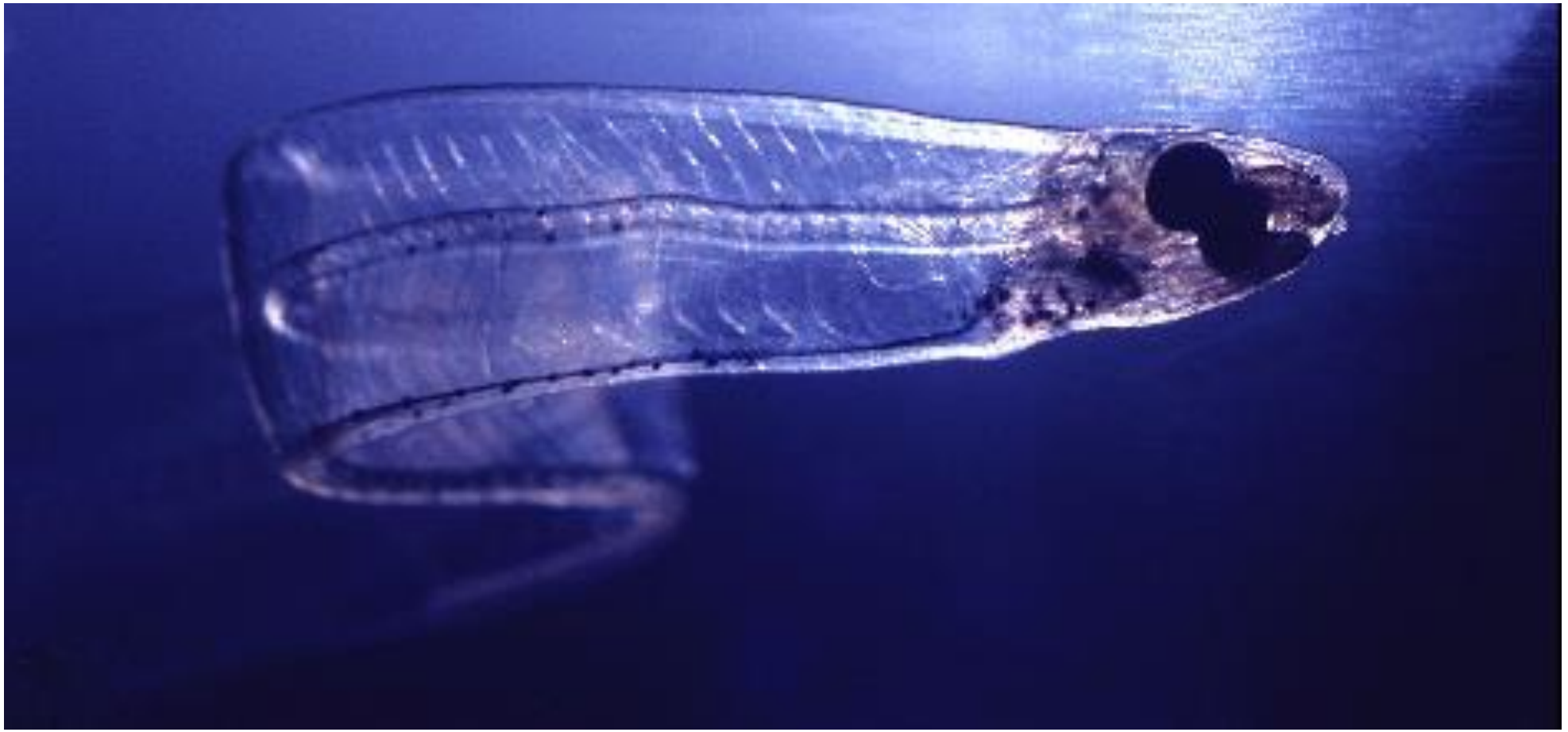
The snake and the eel

Dear children,

Have a look at these two interesting animals. Which one is the sea snake and which one is the eel? They look similar, don’t they? Do you know which one is the fish and which one is the reptile? Although they look alike, they are actually very different animals. Can you guess what makes them different?



Let’s look at just two big differences: their babies and their food.



The babies of a sea snake look like little sea snakes, and each mommy sea snake only makes a few babies each year. The babies of an eel look like tiny little cornflakes, and each mommy eel can make hundreds of them each year. The eel babies are called larvae. Do you know what the different babies eat? The sea snake babies eat tiny fish, and the eel babies eat little bits of plants or tiny animals called plankton. And when the sea snake babies grow up, what do you think they eat? It’s quite surprising. They eat, wait for it…eels!

The adult eels can’t eat sea snakes, they only eat fish. So the poor eels get gobbled down by hungry sea snakes, and are swallowed whole. Why do you think the sea snakes are able to eat the eels, but the eels – with their big mouths and thick bodies – can’t eat sea snakes?



Nobody really knows what the answer to this is, but the Honey Badger and I think it's because the sea snakes can make very strong poison which they use – when they bite the eel – to stop the eel from wriggling out of their stomachs. Eels can't make poison as strong as the sea snake's because they can't breathe air like the sea snakes. The oxygen in the air helps the sea snake make a lot of useful energy, which it then uses for making very strong poison. The poor eel isn't nearly as strong or poisonous as the sea snake, and that's why sea snakes can eat eels, but eels can't eat sea snakes.

It's difficult to imagine that thin sea snake eating that big thick eel, isn't it? You can watch it on YouTube at this link to show you how it happens: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uyT4Cbx2XU.



Warm regards from the Bio-edge,

Robin