

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-21 July 2018

Species specific matters

Aquatic species

Eels (*Anguilla* spp.)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.186 to 17.189 on *Eels* (*Anguilla* spp.) as follows:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

17.186 *The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding:*

- a) *contract independent consultants to undertake a study compiling information on challenges and lessons learnt with regards to implementation of the Appendix II listing of European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) and its effectiveness. This includes in particular the making of non-detriment findings, enforcement and identification challenges, as well as illegal trade. This study should notably take account of the data compiled and advice issued by the ICES/GFCM/EIFAAC Working Group Eel;*
- b) *contract independent consultants to undertake a study on non-CITES listed *Anguilla* species:*
  - i) *documenting trade levels and possible changes in trade patterns following the entry into force of the listing of the European Eel in CITES Appendix II in 2009;*
  - ii) *compiling available data and information on the biology, population status, use and trade in each species, as well as identifying gaps in such data and information, based on the latest available data and taking account inter alia of the Red List assessments by the IUCN Anguillid Eel Specialist Group; and*
  - iii) *providing recommendations for priority topics for technical workshops based on gaps and challenges identified under i)-ii);*
- c) *make the reports from the studies above available to the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29) for their consideration; and*
- d) *organize, where appropriate, international technical workshops, inviting cooperation with and participation by the relevant range States, trading countries, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the IUCN Anguillid Eel Specialist Group, the*

*ICES/GFCM/EIFAAC Working Group Eel, industry and other experts appointed by Parties as appropriate. Such workshops should in particular cover the topics identified by the reports described in subparagraphs a) and b) of this Decision and could focus on challenges specific to the various eel species, such as*

- i) in relation to European eel, the realization of and guidance available for non-detriment findings, as well as enforcement of the Appendix II listing including identification challenges; and*
  - ii) in relation to the other eel species, to enable a better understanding of the effects of international trade, including trade in their various life stages, and possible measures to ensure sustainable trade in such species;*
- e) make any workshop report available to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC30) for their consideration; and*
- f) make available to the Standing Committee relevant information on illegal trade in European eels gathered from the study and the workshop report mentioned in paragraphs a) and e).*

**Directed to range States and Parties involved in trade in *Anguilla* spp.**

17.187 *Range States and Parties involved in trade in *Anguilla* species, in collaboration with the Secretariat and FAO, are encouraged to:*

- a) promote international or regional cooperation on a species-by-species basis, including the convening of regional meetings to discuss how to fill the information gaps and ensure long-term sustainability in the face of increasing demand from international trade;*
- b) provide the Secretariat and their consultants with specific information needed for the purposes of completing Decision 17.186 a) and b) as well as the results of the regional meetings; and*
- c) participate, where appropriate, in the technical workshops and share expertise and knowledge on the priority topics identified [examples provided under in Decision 17.186 paragraph d)].*

**Directed to the Animals Committee**

17.188 *The Animals Committee shall:*

- a) consider, at its 29th and 30th meetings, the reports produced under Decision 17.186, as well as the information submitted by European Eel range States and other eel range States pursuant to Decision 17.187, and any other relevant information on conservation of and trade in *Anguilla* species; and*
- b) provide recommendations to ensure the sustainable trade in *Anguilla* species, to Parties for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

**Directed to the Standing Committee**

17.189 *The Standing Committee shall consider information relating to illegal trade in European eel at its 69th and 70th meetings and adopt recommendations as appropriate.*

Implementation of Decision 17.186

3. The Secretariat reported to the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017) that it had not been able to implement Decision 17.186 within the timeframe envisaged because the necessary external funding could not be secured in time, but that the European Union had generously confirmed its financial support for implementing this Decision (see document [AC29 Doc. 21](#)). A revised timeline was agreed by the Animals Committee, which meant that, subject to the availability of funding, the studies referred

to in paragraphs a) and b) of Decision 17.186 would be presented at the present meeting (see [AC29 summary record](#)).

Decision 17.186, paragraphs a) and b)

4. In compliance with **paragraphs a) and b)** of Decision 17.186, the Secretariat engaged the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to undertake two studies. The first study compiles information on the implementation of the Appendix-II listing of *Anguilla anguilla*, including the making of non-detriment findings, enforcement and identification challenges, and illegal trade. The second study documents trade levels, compiles general species information and identifies knowledge gaps and management challenges for the sustainable use of non-CITES listed anguilla species.
5. In order to gather additional information from CITES Parties and other stakeholders, particularly those focused on implementation and enforcement of the *A. anguilla* CITES listing, and on the biology, population status, use and trade of other *Anguilla* species, two questionnaires were developed. The Secretariat distributed these questionnaires through Notification to the Parties [No. 2018/018](#) of 1 February 2018. The following Parties and territories provided information in time for inclusion in the final studies: Australia, China, Croatia, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, and the British Virgin Islands. Responses were also received from other stakeholders, including submissions from the French professional eel sector [including Comité National des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins (CNPMEM), Comité National de la Pêche Professionnelle eu Eau Douce (CONAPPED) and l'Union du Mareyage Français (UMF)], and the Sustainable Eel Group (SEG).
6. ZSL's study on the "Implementation of the Appendix II listing of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)" is found in Annex 1 to this document. It presents a review of implementation issues, including reporting, enforcement, non-detriment findings, traceability, and illegal trade, and draws conclusions about the effectiveness of the implementation of the current listing of European eel in CITES Appendix II.
7. ZSL's study on the "Status on non-CITES-listed anguillid eels" is found in Annex 2 to this document. It presents: accounts of the other 15 species of *Anguilla*, including information on biology, population, threats, use and the status of the stock and management; investigates trade levels, notably since the listing of *A. anguilla* on CITES Appendix II; looks at management on regional level; and draws conclusions about the sustainability of the trade in anguillid eels.

Decision 17.186, paragraph c)

8. Noting the revised timeline for the implementation of the Decisions on eels, and to facilitate the implementation of **paragraph c)** of Decision 17.186, the Animals Committee established an intersessional working group on eels with the following mandate:
  - a) to review the studies produced by the Secretariat under Decision 17.186, paragraphs a) and b), as and when they become available, and any other relevant information;
  - b) to consider the outcome of any technical workshops organised in relation to Decision 17.186 paragraph d) and e) and to provide any provisional recommendations and views that could be reflected in the workshops; and
  - c) to report to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC30) with its provisional recommendations for consideration by the Committee.

The membership was decided as follows: the Animals Committee representative of Europe (Mr. Fleming; Chair); Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, European Union, France, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, and United States of America; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC); Association of Northeast Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Humane Society International, Japan Wildlife Conservation Society, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Zoological Society of London.

9. Unfortunately, because of the late completion of the studies, the intersessional working group was unable to complete its mandate in time for the submission of a report by the document deadline of AC30.

10. With both studies now available, the intersessional working group has confirmed that it will continue working until the present meeting to fulfil the tasks outlined in its mandate. The Chair of the working group will provide an oral update at this meeting.

#### Decision 17.186, paragraphs d) and e)

11. In compliance with **paragraph d)** of Decision 17.186, the Secretariat convened an international workshop on the conservation, management, fisheries and trade in eels (*Anguilla* species) that took place in the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, London, from 18 to 20 April 2018. The invitation list was compiled from eel range States, destinations countries, respondents to the questionnaire contained in Notification No. 2018/018, members of the intersessional working groups on eel from the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee, and the organisations that are mentioned in paragraph d) of Decision 17.186. The workshop was made possible thanks to the generous support from the European Union, and substantial in-kind support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for which the Secretariat is very grateful. Particularly valuable logistical and technical support was provided by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) and the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.
12. The workshop provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Appendix-II listing of *A. anguilla*; to share their knowledge on the conservation, management and trade in other eel species; as well as to reflect on the impact that the listing and subsequent ban imposed by the European Union on trade in *A. anguilla* has had on other *Anguilla* species. Participants were sent an advance draft version of the study on European eel and were provided with a presentation on progress with the study on non-CITES listed *Anguilla* species at the workshop. Pursuant to **paragraph e)** of Decision 17.186, a detailed workshop report, including recommendations, is presented in Annex 3 to this document for the consideration of the Animals Committee.

#### Decision 17.186, paragraph f)

13. In compliance with **paragraph f)**, relevant information on the illegal trade in European eel (*A. anguilla*) from the studies and workshop report mentioned above will be included in the Secretariat's document for the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70, Rosa Khutor, Sochi, October 2018).

#### Implementation of Decision 17.187

14. In Notification No. 2018/018, the Secretariat reminded range States and Parties involved in trade in *Anguilla* species of the content of Decision 17.187. In this regard, the Animals Committee, at its present meeting, should also consider the results of two regional workshops: a report in document AC30 Doc. 18.2 from the workshop on American eel (*A. rostrata*), submitted by the United States of America on behalf of Canada, the Dominican Republic and the United States of America; and a report in document AC30 Doc 18.3 from the meeting of European eel range States, submitted by the Secretariat on behalf of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

#### Implementation of Decision 17.189

15. At the Standing Committee's 69th meeting (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Secretariat explained that the original timelines outlined in Decision 17.186 could not be met due to delays in securing funding, and that the study on European eel would not be considered until the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee. In document [SC69 Doc. 47.1](#), the Secretariat stated that the illegal export of European eel (*A. anguilla*) destined for Asia, specifically to China and Hong Kong SAR, was continuing, and highlighted a number of enforcement operations that had resulted in seizures of European eels. The European Union also brought to the attention of the Standing Committee a number of enforcement operations that had led to significant seizures of European eels (document [SC69 Doc. 47.2](#)). There was general support for the recommendation to encourage all range, export, transit and import countries to strengthen their cooperation in addressing international illegal trade in *A. anguilla*, and the Standing Committee established an intersessional working group to review information on illegal trade in European eel, including that provided in paragraph f) of Decision 17.186, and report to the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee with provisional recommendations for consideration by the Committee.

## Recommendation

16. Taking account of any analysis/review carried out by the intersessional working group, and the results of the workshops presented in documents AC30 Doc. 18.2 and 18.3, the Animals Committee may wish to consider establishing an in-session working group to draft recommendations, as appropriate, to ensure the sustainable trade in *Anguilla* species, for the Committee's consideration and submission to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP18, Colombo, 2019), in compliance with Decision 17.188.