

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 13-17 July 2020

Species specific matters

EELS (*ANGUILLA* SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.197 to 18.202 on *Eels* (*Anguilla spp.*), which are presented in Annex 1 to this document.

Implementation of Decisions 18.197 and 18.198

3. To date, the Secretariat has not received any information from range States of European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) or range States of non-CITES *Anguilla spp.* in international trade regarding their Decisions 18.197 and 18.198. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to remind these range States that they are directed to provide information to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decisions 18.197 and 18.198 to allow it to report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Implementation of Decision 18.199

4. The Secretariat will issue a Notification to the Parties ahead of the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee, calling on range States to provide information in relation to their implementation of Decisions 18.197 and 18.198. Based on the responses to this Notification, and in accordance with paragraph a) of Decision 18.199, the Secretariat will prepare and submit a summary report with draft recommendations to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee for its consideration.
5. As directed in Decision 18.199 paragraph b), the Secretariat has started to collate available information on the biology of *Anguilla anguilla* in collaboration with experts, including the Anguillid Eel Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN/SSC), with a view to determining whether the glass eel (fingerling) life stage can be considered to have a “low probability of surviving to adulthood”. Based on this assessment, the Animals Committee will be asked to consider the possible use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of *A. anguilla* from aquaculture production systems, and to provide advice and make draft recommendations to the Parties and the Standing Committee, as appropriate. In this context, the Secretariat will also collate information on the various farming and production methods used to grow *A. anguilla*, including a review of the mitigation measures used to try to offset the potential negative impacts of the harvest of glass eels.
6. Concerning paragraph c) of Decision 18.199, the same Notification referred to in paragraph 4 above will invite Parties to submit information regarding current levels of, or emerging trends in, trade in specimens of *Anguilla spp.* The responses will also contribute to the study called for in paragraph d) of the same Decision.
7. Concerning paragraph d) of Decision 18.199, thanks to a contribution from the European Union (EU), the Secretariat will be able to commission the study on levels of eel trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture. The study will investigate the sources of supply, identify any disparities between these and make recommendations for the more effective future management of harvests of, and trade in, eels. It is expected that the results of the study will be ready before the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee.

8. To implement paragraph e) of Decision 18.199, the Secretariat will prepare and submit a summary of the responses to the Notification and the study referred to in paragraph d) of the same Decision, with draft recommendations for consideration at the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee and the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee.

Implementation of Decision 18.200

9. To facilitate the implementation of Decision 18.200, the Animals Committee may wish to establish an intersessional working group. Draft terms of reference for such a working group are presented in paragraph 18 below.
10. To date, Parties have not requested advice or guidance from the Animals Committee with respect to the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) for trade in European eels [see paragraph a) of Decision 18.200]. However, the sustainability of trade in European eel from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia will be reviewed by the Animals Committee in the context of Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Rev. CoP18) on *Review of Significant Trade in specimens of Appendix II species* (see agenda item 13). The Secretariat also notes that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted a draft NDF for review by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The result of the review have been published and can be accessed [here](#).
11. Concerning paragraph b), as indicated in paragraph 5 above, the Secretariat is collaborating with experts, including the IUCN Anguillid Eel Specialist Group, to produce a report on the biology of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), as referred to in Decision 18.199, paragraph b). It is expected that this report will be ready for consideration before the end of 2020, so that it can be reviewed by the proposed intersessional working group, in advance of the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee.
12. Concerning paragraph c), the Animals Committee is asked to review available information relating to the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) to the wild and, if appropriate, provide advice on suitable protocols, taking into account existing guidance and practices, for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19). It is suggested that the Animals Committee start by examining existing guidance such as the [Guidelines for Reintroductions and other conservation translocations](#), produced by IUCN, and Annex 1 to [Resolution Conf. 17.8](#) on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species*.

Implementation of Decision 18.202

13. The Secretariat takes this opportunity to remind donor Parties and other relevant organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), that, under Decision 18.202, they are invited and encouraged to provide support to, and build capacity for, *Anguilla* range States for the purpose of implementing Decisions 18.197 and 18.198.

Additional information

14. The latest advice by the Joint Working Group on Eels (WGEEL) of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was published in November 2019 and can be accessed [here](#). It concludes that the status of the European eel remains critical and advises that:

when the precautionary approach is applied for European eel, all anthropogenic impacts (e.g. caused by recreational and commercial fishing on all stages, hydropower, pumping stations, and pollution) that decrease production and escapement of silver eels should be reduced to, or kept as close as possible to, zero in 2020.

15. The EU Eel Regulation [Council Regulation (EC) No. 1100/2007] was adopted for the protection, recovery and sustainable use of the European eel stock. It requires EU Member States to establish eel management plans for their river basins. The main measures include reducing fishing mortality and improving eel escapement, principally through improving river corridor connectivity. In 2018, the EU commissioned an independent review of the regulation to report on its effectiveness and examine whether changes need to be made to the Regulation and its implementation. The report was published by the EU on 5 March 2020 and can be viewed in full [here](#).

16. In summary, the Regulation was found to be still relevant, recognising that the recovery of eel stock is a long-term process. The review found that considerable improvement is required in the implementation of the Regulation, especially when addressing non-fisheries related anthropogenic mortality. The report recognized a need for an increased focus on working at the eel management unit level and suggested that the European eel stock could come under a stock-wide regional fisheries management approach, with the EU role underpinned by the Regulation.
17. In February 2020, the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP13) adopted Decisions 13.76 to 13.79 on European eel, which are presented in Annex 2 to the present document. The decisions that were adopted include the development of an international Single Species Action Plan for the conservation of the European eel involving all range States, as well as intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations that will be considered at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (CMS COP14).

Recommendations

18. In support of the implementation of Decision 18.200, the Animals Committee is invited to establish an intersessional working group on eels to:
 - a) review the report from the Secretariat on the biology of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) prepared under Decision 18.199, paragraph b), and consider the potential use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of *A. anguilla* from aquaculture production systems, and propose advice and draft recommendations to the Parties and the Standing Committee as appropriate, for consideration by the Animals Committee;
 - b) review available information relating to the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) to the wild and, if appropriate, draft advice on suitable protocols taking into account existing guidance and practices, for consideration by the Animals Committee;
 - c) consider the responses to the Notification to the Parties calling for information with respect to Decisions 18.197, 18.198 and 18.199, and draft recommendations for consideration by the Animals Committee;
 - f) review the findings of the study on levels of eel trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, when available, and draft recommendations for consideration by the Animals Committee; and
 - g) report on the outputs of its work to the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee.

Decisions adopted by the 18th meeting of the CITES
Conference of the Parties on *Eels (Anguilla spp.)*

18.197 Directed to range States of European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*)

Range States of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) are encouraged to:

- a) submit any non-detriment finding studies on European eel they have undertaken to the Secretariat for inclusion on the CITES website; explore the different approaches that might be taken for making non-detriment findings for European eels traded as fingerlings (FIG) compared with those traded as other live eels (LIV); collaborate and share information with other Parties regarding such studies and their outcome, especially where the Parties share catchments or water bodies; seek review and advice from the Animals Committee or other suitable body on any non-detriment findings for European eels where appropriate;
- b) develop and/or implement adaptive European eel management plans at national or sub-national (or catchment) level, with defined and time-bound goals, and enhance collaboration within countries between authorities and other stakeholders with responsibilities for eel management, and between countries where water bodies or catchments are shared;
- c) share information on stock assessments, harvests, the results of monitoring and other relevant data with the Joint Working Group on Eels (WGEEL) of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission, the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas and the Central Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM), so that a full and complete picture of the state of the European eel stock can be established;
- d) develop measures or implement more effectively existing measures to improve the traceability of eels in trade (both live and dead);
- e) provide the Secretariat with information regarding any changes to measures they have in place to restrict the trade in live 'glass' or fingerling European eels; and
- f) provide information to the Secretariat on the implementation of this Decision to allow it to report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

18.198 Directed to range States of non-CITES *Anguilla* spp. in international trade (particularly *A. rostrata*, *A. japonica*, *A. marmorata* and *A. bicolor*)

Range States of non-CITES *Anguilla* spp. in international trade are encouraged to:

- a) where appropriate, implement conservation and management measures, such as adaptive eel management plans, enhanced collaboration within countries, between authorities and other stakeholders with responsibilities for eel management, and related legislation to ensure the sustainability of harvests and international trade in *Anguilla* spp. and make these widely available;
- b) collaborate and cooperate with other range States on shared stocks of *Anguilla* spp. to develop shared objectives for these stocks and their management, improve the understanding of the biology of the species, conduct joint programmes of work and share knowledge and experience;
- c) establish monitoring programmes and develop abundance indices in range States where none exist. For ongoing programmes, identifying opportunities for expanding to new locations and/or live stages would be favourable;
- d) improve traceability of *Anguilla* spp. in trade (both live and dead); and
- e) provide information to the Secretariat on the implementation of this Decision to allow it report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

18.199 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) prepare and submit a summary report on the implementation of Decisions 18.197 and 18.198 with draft recommendations to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate, for their consideration;
- b) collate available information on the biology of *Anguilla anguilla* in collaboration with experts, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Anguillid Specialist Group, with a view to determining whether the glass eel (fingerling) life stage can be considered to have a “low probability of surviving to adulthood”, and report its findings to the Animals Committee;
- c) invite Parties, through a Notification, to submit information regarding current levels of, or emerging trends in, trade in specimens of *Anguilla* spp;
- d) subject to the availability of resources, commission a study to consider levels of trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, and sources of supply, identify any disparities between these and make recommendations for the more effective future management of harvests and trade; and
- e) prepare and submit a summary of the responses to the Notification and the study referred to in paragraph d) of this Decision, if available, with draft recommendations to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee as appropriate for their consideration.

18.200 Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee shall:

- a) if requested, consider any reports submitted by Parties with respect to the making of non-detriment findings for trade in European eel and provide advice and guidance as needed;
- b) review the report from the Secretariat on the biology of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) prepared under Decision 18.199 paragraph b) and consider the potential use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of *A. anguilla* from aquaculture production systems, and provide advice and make recommendations to the Parties and the Standing Committee as appropriate;
- c) review available information relating to the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) to the wild and, if appropriate, provide advice on suitable protocols taking into account existing guidance and practices, for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
- d) consider the progress reports provided by Parties and the report by the Secretariat with respect to Decisions 18.197, 18.198 and 18.199 and make any recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18.201 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) consider the report prepared by the Secretariat and any other available information relating to illegal trade in European eel, including the case study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on European eel trafficking as part of the 2nd World Wildlife Crime Report, and make recommendations as appropriate;
- b) review any advice and recommendations coming from the Animals Committee concerning Decision 18.200 paragraph b) and make recommendations as appropriate; and
- c) with the assistance of the Secretariat, engage with the World Customs Organization to examine the feasibility of harmonizing customs codes relevant to trade in all *Anguilla* species and report to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18.202 Directed to donor Parties and other relevant organizations

Donor Parties and other relevant organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others, are invited and encouraged to provide support to, and build capacity for, Anguilla range States for the purpose of implementing Decisions 18.197 and 18.198.

Decisions adopted by the 13th meeting of the
CMS Conference of the Parties on *European Eel*

13.76 *Directed to Parties that are Range States to the European Eel*

Parties that are Range States to the European Eel are urged to:

- a) provide guidance to the Secretariat on the structure and scope of the proposed Action Plan for the European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) by 31 May 2020, so that a draft can be prepared, circulated and finalized in time for submission to the Standing Committee at its 52nd or 53rd meeting;
- b) provide funding for the development of the Plan, including the convening of a Range State Meeting to finalize it.

13.77 *Directed to the Standing Committee*

Request the Standing Committee to adopt the Action Plan, if provided to the Standing Committee, at its 52nd or 53rd meeting.

13.78 *Directed to Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations*

Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to provide expertise and funding for the development of the Plan, including the convening of a Range State meeting to finalize the plan.

13.79 *Directed to the Secretariat*

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of resources:

- a) develop a draft Action Plan for the European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), following guidance provided by Range State Parties;
- b) hold consultations among the Range States and relevant IGOs and NGOs, on the draft Action Plan, by correspondence and if funding permits, by convening another meeting of Range States;
- c) submit the draft plan to the Standing Committee at its 52nd or 53rd meeting for adoption, or, if not finalized in time, to the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.