

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Online, 31 May, 1, 4, 21 and 22 June 2021

EELS (*ANGUILLA* SPP.)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

Co-Chairs: representative for Africa (Mr. Kasoma), representative for Europe (Ms. Zikova) (Chair);

Parties: Algeria, Canada, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America; and

IGOs and NGOs: Convention on Migratory Species, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Animal Welfare Institute, Association of Northeast Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Global Guardian Trust, Species Survival Network, TRAFFIC, Zoological Society of London.

Mandate

The in-session working group shall:

- a) initiate a discussion to consider the potential use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of *A. anguilla* from aquaculture production systems and make recommendations to the Animals Committee as appropriate;
- b) consider the Secretariat's draft decisions in paragraph 17 of the addendum and identify other parts of Decisions 18.197 to 18.202 that may merit a renewal or extension;
- 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; and
- d) as appropriate, draft recommendations directed to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties for the Animals Committee to consider.

Recommendations

The working group recommends that the Animals Committee agrees to the following:

Concerning paragraph a) of the mandate, the working group discussed the potential value of using source code R (ranching) to distinguish eels raised in aquaculture from wild-caught eels. The group also noted uncertainties linked to the use of source code R, in particular that it is unclear whether the glass eel / fingerling life-stage can be considered to have a "low probability of surviving to adulthood", and often eels are reared in conditions that might not be considered a "controlled environment". The group agreed to reconsider the issue when making recommendations on the study on levels of trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, that are currently being prepared in the implementation of Decision 18.199, paragraph d), which

will be reviewed by the Animals Committee following CoP19. The group also recommended that European eel could be a good case study for consideration at the planned workshop on Non-Detriment Findings under Decision 18.132.

Concerning paragraph b) of the mandate, the working group recommends that the following set of draft decisions be considered for submission to CoP19. Note that these decisions incorporate revised versions of the draft decisions presented in paragraph 17 of the addendum to document AC31 Doc. 22.

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

19.AA 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;
- f) share with the Secretariat, where available, protocols and guidelines for reintroduction of seized live European eels to the wild; and
- g) provide information to the Secretariat on the implementation of this Decision or any updates to the information previously submitted in response to [Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018](#) on eels, to allow it to report to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Secretariat

19.BB The Secretariat shall:

- a) issue a notification within 90 days of the close of the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, inviting range States of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) to submit to the Secretariat information on the implementation of Decision 19.AA or any updates to the information previously submitted in response to Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018 on eels;
- b) prepare and submit a summary of the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018 on eels, including any updates provided under Decision 19.AA, with draft recommendations to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate, for their consideration; and
- c) submit the study prepared in the implementation of Decision 18.199, paragraph d), on levels of trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, and sources of supply, identify any disparities between these, and draft recommendations for the more effective future management of harvests and trade for consideration by the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, as appropriate.

Directed to the Animals Committee

19.CC 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; and
- b) consider the study referred to in paragraph c) of Decision 19.BB, the report produced by the Secretariat under paragraph b) of Decision 19.BB and make recommendations as appropriate, for consideration by the Standing Committee and the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.DD The Standing Committee shall review any advice and recommendations coming from the Animals Committee concerning Decision 19.CC and make recommendations as appropriate.

Concerning paragraph c) of the mandate, relating to providing guidance on the risks and benefits of re-introducing seized live eels to the wild, the group was not aware that there is significant demand for such guidance by Parties. It is considered that Resolution Conf. 17.8 on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species* provides ample general guidance and most parties have internal protocols, policies and regulations which govern whether live fish can be returned to the wild and, if so, under what conditions. Consequently, the group felt that Decision 18.200, paragraph c), was not considered a priority task at this time and recommends that this part of the Decision is not renewed following CoP19. However, the group agreed to reconsider the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) to the wild when making recommendations on the study on levels of trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, that is currently being prepared in the implementation of Decision 18.199, paragraph d), which will be reviewed by the Animals Committee following CoP19.