

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



Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Lyon (France), 7 - 11 March 2022

Species specific matters

Eels (*Anguilla anguilla*)

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been prepared by the Animals Committee.\*
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. Decisions 18.200 and 18.201 are of particular relevance to this document, as follows:

**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.*

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## 18.201 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall:

[...]

- b) review any advice and recommendations coming from the Animals Committee concerning Decision 18.200 paragraph b) and make recommendations as appropriate;

[...]

3. At the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee (AC31, online, June 2021), the Secretariat reported in document [AC31 Doc.22](#) and its [addendum](#) on the implementation of the Decisions on *Eels* (*Anguilla spp.*). This included updates on the implementation of Decisions 18.197 to 18.200 and a summary of Parties' responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018 (Annex 2) on the request for information on the status, management and trade in eels (*Anguilla spp.*) that was published on 8 February 2021, in compliance with Decision 18.199, paragraph a).

### Implementation of Decision 18.200

4. Concerning paragraph a) of Decision 18.200, the Animals Committee received a request on 16 September 2021 from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) seeking advice and guidance on its non-detriment findings (NDF) for European eels. The consultation with the members was initiated on 6 October 2021, with members given until 15 November to respond. The discussions and inputs from the Committee allowed the AC Chair to respond to the UK on the 16th of December, providing feedback and suggestions to improve its NDF and to consider submitting the NDF to the IUCN Anguillid eel specialist group for review.
5. In document AC31 Doc. 22, the Secretariat noted that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had submitted a draft version of this NDF for review by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The result of this review was published and can be accessed [here](#).
6. The sustainability of trade in European eel from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia has also been 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* and can be found in document SC74 Doc. 30.1.
7. Concerning paragraph b) of Decision 18.200, at AC31, in the [addendum](#) to document AC31 Doc. 22, the Secretariat presented the information it had collated on the biology of *A. 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". These consultations determined that there is a lack of data collected over relevant spatial and temporal scales to calculate a natural mortality of juvenile eels. Therefore, the issue of whether the glass eel (fingerling) life stage can be considered to have a "low probability of surviving to adulthood" was determined to be complex and inconclusive. The Committee agreed to reconsider the issue of the potential use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of European eel (*A. anguilla*) from aquaculture production systems 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 the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
8. Concerning paragraph c) of Decision 18.200, the Animals Committee was 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). In the addendum to document AC31 Doc. 22, the Secretariat suggested that the Animals Committee start by examining existing guidance such as [Guidelines for Reintroductions and other conservation translocations](#), produced by IUCN, and the provisions in Annex 1 to [Resolution Conf. 17.8](#) on *Disposal of illegally traded and confiscated specimens of CITES-listed species*. The Committee agreed to reconsider the issue of the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels 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 the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

9. Concerning paragraph d) of Decision 18.200, the Secretariat reported in document AC31 Doc.22 and its addendum on the implementation of the Decisions on *Eels (Anguilla spp.)*. Annex 1 of the [addendum](#) summarised the responses to the questionnaire on current management plans, monitoring programmes, stock assessments, and national/international traceability of anguillid eels. Parties also reported on NDFs for *Anguilla anguilla* and the restrictions in place for harvest and trade of glass eels. However, the Animals Committee were of the view that there was insufficient time to review the 70 pages of responses to the questionnaire during AC31. The Committee agreed to draft a decision for consideration at CoP19 that would direct the Secretariat to issue a notification to the Parties, inviting them to submit to the Secretariat the information that was originally requested in Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018 on eels or to submit any updates to the information that they may have previously submitted in response to that notification.
10. In the addendum to document AC31 Doc. 22, the Secretariat reported that to facilitate the collation of the information sought from Parties under Decision 18.199, paragraph c), and allow it to report to the Animals and Standing Committees as instructed in paragraph e) of Decision 18.199, a second questionnaire was included in Annex 3 to Notification to the Parties No. 2021/018. This questionnaire sought to collect information from Parties regarding current levels of, or emerging trends in, trade in specimens of *Anguilla* spp. and was to be completed by those Parties that are source, transit or destination countries for anguillid eels.
11. The information collected in response to this questionnaire will be used to inform the study referred to in Decision 18.199, paragraph d). This study will investigate levels of trade and trade patterns, especially in live eels for aquaculture, and 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. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) was contracted to undertake the study and a summary of its preliminary findings, including a summary of the responses to the questionnaire, was presented in Annex 2 of the addendum to document AC31 Doc. 22. The results of the study are expected to be submitted at this meeting of the Standing Committee.
12. As the final study called for in Decision 18.199, paragraph d) was not available in time for review by the Animals Committee at its 31st meeting, the Committee agreed to submit draft decisions that will allow it to be considered after the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19).

#### Summary of recommendations from the Animals Committee

13. The Animals Committee at AC31 adopted the following recommendations [see [AC31 Com. 1 \(Rev. by Sec.\)](#)]:
  - a) The Committee agreed to reconsider the issues of the potential use of source code R (ranching) for specimens of European eel (*A. anguilla*) from aquaculture production systems and the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live European eels 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 the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
  - b) The Committee noted that the European eel could be a good case study for consideration at the planned workshop on non-detriment findings under Decision 18.132; and
  - c) The Committee agreed to submit the four draft decisions presented in Annex 2 of this document for consideration at the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP19, Panama City, November, 2022).

#### Recommendations

14. The Standing Committee is invited to:
  - a) note the information contained in this document; and
  - b) amend the draft decisions contained in Annex 2 to incorporate any additional draft decisions proposed by the Standing Committee for consideration at CoP19.

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 on Eels (*Anguilla* spp.) to be considered for adoption at the  
19th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties  
(CoP19, Panama City, November 2022)

**19.AA 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;
- 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.

**19.BB Directed to the Secretariat**

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.

**19.CC *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; 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.

**19.DD *Directed to the Standing Committee***

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