

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



Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Colombo (Sri Lanka), 23 May – 3 June 2019

Species specific matters

EELS (*ANGUILLA* SPP.)

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee* and prepared in collaboration with the Secretariat.

Background

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*

* 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.

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, paragraphs a) to c)

3. At the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC29, Geneva, July 2017) and the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69, Geneva, November 2017), the Secretariat proposed revised timeframes to implement Decision 17.186. This was agreed, allowing the Secretariat to report to the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC30, Geneva, July 2018) and the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70,

Sochi, October 2018). The Secretariat would like to acknowledge the generous support by the European Union in providing the necessary funding to implement this Decision.

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 compiled 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 (see document AC30 Doc. 18.1, [Annex 1](#)). The second study documented trade levels, compiled general species information and identified knowledge gaps and management challenges for the sustainable use of non-CITES listed *Anguilla* species (see document AC30 Doc. 18.1, [Annex 2](#)).
5. In order to gather additional information from the CITES Parties and other stakeholders, particularly those focussed 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. These questionnaires were distributed 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 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. 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 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 Zoological Society of London.

7. In fulfilment of Decision 17.186, paragraph c), the two studies mentioned in paragraph 4 above were made available for consideration at AC30, and the Animals Committee's intersessional working group provided an oral update on progress made in reviewing the studies at AC30.

Decision 17.186, paragraphs d) and e)

8. 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 organizations 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. Particularly valuable logistical and technical support was provided by the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.
9. 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. Pursuant to **paragraph e)** of Decision 17.186, a detailed workshop report, including recommendations, was presented for consideration by the Animals Committee at AC30 (see [Annex 3](#) to document AC30 Doc. 18.1).

Decision 17.186, paragraph f)

10. In compliance with **paragraph f)** of Decision 17.186, relevant information on the illegal trade in European eel (*A. anguilla*) from the studies and workshop report mentioned above were presented by the Secretariat in document [SC70 Doc. 45](#) for consideration by the Standing Committee.

Implementation of Decision 17.187

11. 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 AC30 also considered 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; 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 17.188

12. Based on its reviews of the eel studies, the reported outcomes of workshops, information in document AC30 Doc. 12.2 on the Review of Significant Trade in *A. anguilla* from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and information on trade in *A. anguilla* from Turkey, the Animals Committee adopted recommendations at AC30 to ensure the sustainable trade in *Anguilla* species, that can be found in document [AC30 Com. 5 \(Rev. by Sec.\)](#). These included several draft decisions that are presented in Annex 1 of this document.
13. In addition, the Animals Committee referred two issues to the Standing Committee for its consideration at SC70. Firstly, the Animals Committee considered that that it might be beneficial if specimens of *A. anguilla* raised in aquaculture could be distinguished from those originating from direct wild harvest. This could potentially be accomplished through the use of source code R (ranching), however it was not clear whether *A. anguilla* could be considered a species where eggs or juveniles are taken from the wild, where they would otherwise have had a very low probability of surviving to adulthood as defined in paragraph 1 a) of Resolution Conf. 11.16 (Rev. CoP15) on *Ranching and trade in ranched specimens of species transferred from Appendix I to Appendix II*. Secondly, the Animals Committee also agreed that having better harmonisation of customs codes for trade in all *Anguilla* species would be desirable to enable patterns of trade to be understood and, for *A. anguilla*, to enable comparison of customs and CITES trade data. Noting that discussions on customs codes needed engagement with the World Customs Organization, the issue was also referred to the Standing Committee.

Implementation of Decision 17.189

14. The Standing Committee considered information relating to illegal trade in European eel at SC69 and SC70. At SC69, the Secretariat stated in document [SC69 Doc. 47.1](#) that the illegal export of *A. anguilla* destined for Asia, specifically to China and Hong Kong SAR, was continuing, and it 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*.
15. To facilitate the implementation of Decision 17.189, SC69 established an intersessional working group on European eel with a mandate to: review information on illegal trade in European eel, including that provided in paragraph f) of Decision 17.186, as and when it becomes available, and report to SC70. This intersessional working group was chaired by Spain.
16. At SC70, the Committee considered document [SC70 Doc. 45](#), submitted by the Secretariat and the Animals Committee, and noted the oral report provided by the Chair of the intersessional working group on European eel on progress made in the intersessional period. Based on the outcome of an in-session working group, the Standing Committee adopted a set of recommendations addressed to European eel range States, transit

and destination Parties and other stakeholders to tackle illegal trade in European eel (*A. anguilla*) (see SC70 Summary Record). The Committee also requested the Secretariat to amend the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* and the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade reports*, as proposed in paragraph 21 of document SC70 Doc. 45, for adoption at its 71st meeting (SC71, Colombo, May 2019).

17. The Standing Committee also agreed to propose to the Conference of the Parties two further draft decisions: one directing the Animals Committee to review the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized live eels to the wild and another directing the Standing Committee to review available information on illegal trade in European eel. The Committee considered the referrals from the Animals Committee concerning source codes and custom codes and requested the Secretariat to develop draft decisions on these issues for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. A complete set of the draft decisions proposed by the Animals Committee, Standing Committee and the Secretariat is presented in Annex 1 for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties.

Recommendations

18. The Conference of the Parties is invited to:
 - a) adopt the draft decisions presented in Annex 1 to the present document; and
 - b) confirm that Decisions 17.186 to 17.189 have been implemented and can be deleted.

COMMENTS OF THE SECRETARIAT

Draft decisions on eels (*Anguilla* spp.)

Note that decisions 18.GG and 18.II are proposed by the Standing Committee, while those proposed by the Secretariat at the request of the Standing Committee are indicated by an asterisk (*) and are in italics. All other decisions are proposed by the Animals Committee.

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

18.AA Parties are encouraged to:

- a) share and publish any non-detriment finding studies on European eel they have undertaken; explore the different approaches that would be needed for making non-detriment findings for European eels traded as fingerlings (FIG) and those traded as other live eels (LIV); seek peer review where appropriate; collaborate and share information with other Parties regarding such studies and their outcome, especially where they share catchments or water bodies;
- b) develop and/or implement adaptive eel management plans, or regularly review and revise these, 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 EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels (WGEEL) so that a full and complete picture of the state of the stock can be established;
- d) develop measures or implement more effectively existing measures to improve the traceability of eels in trade;
- e) provide the Secretariat with information on any measures they have in place to restrict the trade in live 'glass' or fingerling eels; and
- f) report on progress or provide information to the Secretariat in time for consideration at the 31st or 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee.

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

18.BB Parties are encouraged to:

- a) implement conservation and management measures 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 the reporting and traceability of *Anguilla* spp. in trade;
- e) develop and/or implement adaptive eel management plans at national or sub-national (or catchment) level and enhance collaboration within countries between authorities and other stakeholders with responsibilities for eel management; and
- f) report progress on these measures to the Animals Committee at its 31st and 32nd meetings.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 18.CC The Secretariat shall invite Parties, through a Notification, to report on their progress in implementing Decision 18.BB, and prepare a summary report with draft recommendations in time for submission to the 31st and 32nd meetings of the Animals Committee.

The Secretariat shall invite Parties, through a Notification, to submit information regarding current levels of, or emerging trends in, their demand for specimens of *Anguilla* spp. and, subject to the availability of resources, commission a study to consider levels of demand from consumer States, especially for 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.

- 18.DD* *The Secretariat shall collaborate with experts, including the IUCN anguillid specialist group, to collate available information on the biology of *Anguilla anguilla* and report its findings to the Animals Committee.*

Directed to the Animals Committee

- 18.EE The Animals Committee shall consider, at its 31st and 32nd meetings, any reports by Parties with respect to the making of non-detriment findings for trade in European eel with respect to Decisions 18.AA and provide advice and guidance.

- 18.FF The Animals Committee shall, at its 31st and 32nd meetings, consider the progress reports provided by Parties and the report by the Secretariat with respect to Decisions 18.BB and 18.CC and make any recommendations to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

- 18.GG The Animals Committee, at its 31st and 32nd meetings, shall review available information relating to the potential risks and benefits of reintroducing seized, live eels (*Anguilla* spp.) 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.

- 18.HH* *The Animals Committee shall review the report from the Secretariat on the biology of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) 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.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 18.II The Standing Committee shall consider information relating to illegal trade in European eel at its 73rd and 74th meetings, including the UNODC case study on European eel trafficking as part of the 2nd Wildlife Crime Report, and make recommendations as appropriate.

- 18.JJ* *With respect to Decision 18.HH, the Standing Committee shall review any advice and recommendations coming from the Animals Committee and make recommendations as appropriate.*

- 18.KK* *The Standing Committee shall, 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.*

Directed to donor Parties and other relevant organizations

- 18.LL 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.AA to 18.CC, 18.EE, 18.FF and 18.II.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND SOURCE OF FUNDING
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS OR DECISIONS

According to Resolution Conf. 4.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Submission of draft resolutions, draft decisions and other documents for meetings of the Conference of the Parties*, the Conference of the Parties decided that any draft resolutions or decisions submitted for consideration at a meeting of the Conference of the Parties that have budgetary and workload implications for the Secretariat or permanent committees must contain or be accompanied by a budget for the work involved and an indication of the source of funding.

It is thought that most of the administrative work in the proposed decisions could be undertaken by the Secretariat within available resources. However, the study referred to in Decision 18.CC would require external funds of approximately 45,000-50,000 USD.