

European Anglers Federation resolution on the European eel

The European Anglers Federation (EAF), representing 10 European nations (1) and over 5 million affiliated anglers, is concerned by the still serious decline of the European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) and put forward a new resolution.

The decline of the European eel has been documented since the 1980s. All indicators testify that the species is in an alarming position. The European eel is currently classified in the “critically endangered” category of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list, which is the last category before the species is classified as “extinct”.

In 1999, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, or ICES, issued a scientific opinion according to which “the eel stock is outside safe biological limits” and that current fishery is not sustainable. The ICES recommended the urgent elaboration of a management program for the recovery of the stock of European eels and advised, also, that fishery as well as other human activities influencing fishing or the stock of European eels be reduced as much as possible.

In response to this scientific assessment and in consideration of the opinion issued by the ICES, European regulation n° 1100/2007 was adopted on September 18, 2007 implementing specific measures aiming at replenishing the stock of European eels. The regulation imposes an anticipated escapement rate of at least 40% silver eel biomass relative to the best estimate of escapement that would have existed if no anthropogenic influences had impacted the stock (article 2 of regulation n° 1100/2007 of September 18, 2007).

In the meantime, as the conservation of the European eel became a matter of increasing concern, the Member States of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of World Fauna and Flora (CITES or Washington Convention) agreed on March 6, 2009, to initially include this species in appendix II of the convention. This formalized the regulation of the international trade of this species. Then, as a result of impulse from the European Union, CITES reduced quotas for import and export of the European eel outside of the European zone to 0 as of December 6, 2010 for the 2010-2011 period and in October 7, 2011 for the 2011-2012 period. CITES intends to extend the validity of this measure.

The European anglers Federation asks the European authorities to ban import and export of the European eel outside of the European zone for an undefinitive time.

(1) Austria – Belgium – Czech Republic – France – Germany – Hungary – Poland – Slovakia – Italia – Croatia.

Resolution adopted at the Council of Presidents of November 25, 2011 in Zilina – Slovakia.