

POSITION PAPER

On the ICES REPORT ON THE EU REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION OF THE EEL MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORTS.

10 October 2022

Background

On May 20th, 2022 the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) published its report¹ on the EU Member States' progress reports against the escapement biomass target defined in the Eel Regulation (Council Regulation 1100/2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel) and the theoretical lifetime anthropogenic mortality threshold implied by the escapement target.

FEAP view

This federation notes the incomplete success of the measures put in place by the European Union for the recovery of the European eel population.

FEAP acknowledges that eels have a relevant role to play in ecosystem recovery and biodiversity.

This federation underlines the strong impact of illegal fishing, trade and unreported catches and other anthropogenic activities such as hydroelectric production, toxic pollution in the reduction of the eel population in the different stages (from larvae to reproducers).

Furthermore, FEAP stresses the impact of ichthyophagous avian predators on eel population reduction and mortality.

FEAP position

This federation presents the European Commission with the following calls:

1. There is a need to intensify even further the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing of eels and eel trade between the Member States and Third Countries.

¹ EU request for technical evaluation of the Eel Management Plan progress reports https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Request_for_technical_evaluation_of_the_Eel_Management_Plan_progress_reports/19902958



2. FEAP requests the European Commission to assess the impact of cormorants on the eel population in the European Union and to establish, from a precautionary perspective, a pan-European cormorant management plan.
3. Robust steps should be taken to facilitate the natural migration of eels up rivers and to reduce mortalities caused by hydroelectricity production, toxic pollution and other indirect anthropic activities.
4. Stresses the need to intensify research efforts on eel biology, its interactions with the environment, and eel reproduction in captivity.
5. FEAP requests the European Commission to recognize the socio-economic importance of small-scale fishing and eel farming in European cultural traditions.
6. Overall, FEAP does not support the proposal on total stopping of eel fisheries.

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers is an organisation that represents the European fish farming profession and is based in Brussels. FEAP is composed of 24 national fish farming associations from 23 countries, both EU and non-EU. The combined yearly production of FEAP members surpasses 2,5 million tonnes of nutritious, safe, delicious and environmentally sustainable fish.