

March 2010



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

### Twenty-sixth Session

Zagreb, Croatia, 17–20 May 2010

### SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT

### SUB-COMMISSION I – BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

**Chairperson:** T. Brenner (Germany)  
**Vice-Chairperson:** J. Caffrey (Ireland)  
**Rapporteur:** I. Navodaru (Romania)  
**Technical Secretary:** G. Marmulla (FAO)

#### Joint EIFAC/ICES *Ad Hoc* Working Party on Eel

Convener: R. Poole

The EIFAC Working Group on Eel has been active since the 1970's and acted as a major focus for collation of eel data and information on eel biology through its symposia in the 1980s and 1990s – a task it continues to achieve through its comprehensive annual reports. A widespread severe decline in recruitment was observed between 1983 and 1985. By 1993, this decline in recruitment, along with a stock-wide reduction in landings, was leading to serious concern and since 1998, the EIFAC Working Group has operated on a joint basis with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), providing scientific advice on stock data and eel management, particularly in relation to the EU Action Plan for the Recovery of Eel (EU 2007: COM (2005) 472).

The Working Group has met twice in the intersessional period, i.e. in Leuven, Belgium, in September 2008 hosted by INBO/KUL and in Gothenburg, Sweden, in September 2009 hosted by the Swedish Board of Fisheries, and has produced a full report for each meeting. 41 experts from 17 countries attended the Leuven meeting and 34 experts from 15 countries attended the Gothenburg meeting. In 2009, the Working Group also collaborated with an ICES Workshop on “Age Reading of European and American Eel” (WKAREA) and an ICES Study Group on “American and European Eels in Saline Waters” (SGAESAW).

Over the period, the main focus of the Working Party (WP) was in documenting the status of the European eel stock and fisheries and compiling draft scientific advice. Recruitment of eel

is at an historical low, with no obvious signs of recovery, and exploitation of the stock is biologically unsustainable. The Working Group recommended that an international recovery plan for the European eel stock be developed for the whole stock on an urgent basis and that exploitation and other anthropogenic impacts on production/escapement of silver eels be reduced to as close to zero as possible until such a plan was agreed upon and implemented. In addition to documenting the status of the stock and fisheries and compiling management advice, the WP has provided scientific advice in support of the EU recovery plan for the stock of European Eel, examining methods of stock assessment and local stock targets and setting up an international assessment of the eel stock and post-evaluation of the regulation. The Working Group updated the eel quality database and also presented advances in stocking, reviewed eel quality data and provided advice on optimizing the spawning output in the light of declining recruitment.

### **Ad Hoc Working Party on Fish monitoring in fresh waters**

Convener: P. Hickley

Two draft documents are on the EIFAC website and await further comment and input from members of the WP:

- Information Note on Electric Fishing Best Practice  
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/eifac/wpfmfw/WPFMFVbestpracticeguidev2.pdf>
- Manual on recommended sampling methods for the monitoring of fish populations in fresh waters  
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/eifac/wpfmfw/DraftGuidelinesMonitoringFishFreshwaters.pdf>

Following the joint “EIFAC/CEN Fisheries Acoustics Workshop” held in Dorset, UK, on March 2006, the revised draft standard “Water Quality – Guidance on the estimation of fish abundance with mobile hydroacoustic methods” was presented by Mr Hateley (UK) at the CEN TG4 Fish Task Group in Lelystad, Netherlands, on 27 May 2009. The subsequent prEN vote was positive with 20 votes for and eight abstentions. EC Mandate M/424 “*Mandate for standardisation addressed to CEN for the development or improvement of standards in support of the water framework directive*” (WFD, 2000/60/EC) was further discussed at the Lelystad meeting. This requires all CEN methodological standards to be validated through inter-laboratory comparisons, with the work for the Hydroacoustics work package contracted to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the Environment Agency. Due to delays in the contracting process, field work for the inter-calibration was postponed to 2010.

The WP had assisted the Biology Centre of Sciences of the Czech Republic in conducting the conference “Fish Stock Assessment Methods for Lakes and Reservoirs: Towards the True Picture of Fish Stock” which was held in Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic, from 11 to 15 September 2007. During 2008, the Convener of the WP assisted with the editing of selected papers for the proceedings. These were published as a special issue of Fisheries Research, Volume 96, February 2009. It is intended to provide similar support to the forthcoming conference “Fish Sampling with Active Methods”, Ceske Budejovice, 8–11 September 2010 ([www.fsam2010.wz.cz](http://www.fsam2010.wz.cz)).

### **Ad Hoc Working Group on Introductions and stocking**

Convener: I. Cowx

In line with agreement during the 25<sup>th</sup> Session in Antalya, the WP used the EU FP6 funded project entitled “Impact of alien species in aquaculture (IMPASSE)” as a vehicle for delivering the work programme. The outputs of this work programme are now available at <http://www2.hull.ac.uk/discover/hifi/impasse/documents.aspx>. The reports available include:

- Role of alien species in European aquaculture, with linkages to fisheries.
- Analysis of drivers of the use of introduced species and dispersal mechanisms from aquaculture related activities.
- Review of introductions of aquatic species in Europe.
- Review of spread of novel pathogens and diseases caused by the introduction of alien species.
- Review of the impacts of introductions on the aquatic environment and ecosystem services.
- Analysis of changes in genetic integrity of indigenous populations resulting from alien species introduction and genetically-modified organisms.
- Social and economic impacts of alien species introductions: Decision tools for aquaculture.

The Convener of the WP provided expert advice to the EU on implementation of the Council Regulation 708/2007 on “Use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture”.

The WP was involved in the conference entitled “Management of Alien Species for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries”, held in Florence, Italy, in November 2008, and members of the WP made a number of presentations. Information on the conference can be found on <http://www.dbag.unifi.it/maliaf/>. The proceedings of the conference will be published in a special issue of Applied Ichthyology during 2010.

### **Ad Hoc Working Group on Sturgeon**

Convener: M. Chebanov

During the intersessional period, emphasis was given to work on two FAO sturgeon-related projects (supervised by Raymon van Anrooy, Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAOSEC) as follows:

- “*Capacity building for the recovery and management of the sturgeon fisheries of the Caspian Sea*” (TCP/INT/3101);
- “*Recovery of sturgeon population in Turkey: habitat assessment and restocking*” (TCP/TUR/3202).

In the framework of the first project, the “Regional Training Workshop on Sturgeon Hatchery Practices and Management” was held from 15 to 18 April 2009 in Atyrau, Kazakhstan. The first draft of the “Technical guidelines on sturgeon hatchery practices and hatchery management for restocking”, prepared with participation of the Working Group members, was discussed during this event. The second draft was completed before the

“6<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Sturgeon” in Wuhan, China, and presented by the Convener of the WP (October, 2009) during the special Workshop.

In the framework of the second project, the Convener and WP members were involved in related activities, including provision of training, hatchery reconstruction, assistance in fry rearing, etc. WP members, in collaboration with the Central Fisheries Research Institute and Istanbul University, elaborated a programme of genetic research of the Black Sea sturgeon populations. Based on the “*Sturgeon breeding and rearing handbook*” (Chebanov et al., 2004), the updated manuscript “*Sturgeon hatchery manual*” was completed. The Training Workshop on Sturgeon Hatchery Techniques and Feed Management is to be conducted in April 2010.

The book “*Ultrasound diagnostics in sturgeon broodstock management*” (M. Chebanov and E. Galich) was published (in English) in November 2009.

The World Sturgeon Conservation Society (WSCS) Board of Directors Meeting and the General Assembly 2009 were held in Germany with participation of WP members.

A major part of the WP members took an active part in the “6<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Sturgeons”, being involved in its organization, presenting oral papers, etc. The Convener of the WP chaired the Session “Sturgeon Aquaculture research and development” and organized and conducted the special workshop “Theory and practice in sexing and staging maturity in sturgeons”. In addition, members of the WP had been involved in the assessment of the status of different sturgeon species in accordance with the updated International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) “*Red List*”.

During the years 2008–2009, experts of the WP took part in two sturgeon projects (CIS located), i.e. in Armenia (in cooperation with the Armenian Farmers Association) and Moldova, aiming at building capacity of sturgeon aquaculture in these countries.

### ***Ad Hoc Working Party on Fish passage best practices***

Convener: A. Zitek

Despite several attempts by the Convener to organize activities, unfortunately, little progress has been made in achieving the set targets. This is mainly due to the fact that the experts who had offered to contribute were extremely busy with other commitments outside the realm of the WP. However, the Convener of the WP and other WP members contributed to the preparation of a guideline for building fish ladders in Austria which could be an important contribution to the EIFAC natural fish pass guideline.

### ***Ad Hoc Working Party on Mapping of fish distribution and aquatic habitat quality***

Convener: R. Fricke

No progress report was received. As for several years no progress has been made, the 2009 Meeting of the Executive Committee of EIFAC decided that it will be recommended to the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of EIFAC that this WP be discontinued in the absence of an active convener.

### ***Ad Hoc Working Party on Crayfish***

Convener: M. Pursiainen

In accordance with the TORs and the agreed work-programme, the first meeting of the WP was held in connection with the Regional European Crayfish Workshop “Future of Native Crayfish in Europe” that took place from 7- to 10 September 2009 in Pisek, Czech Republic, (<https://webmail.rktl.fi/CookieAuth.dll?GetLogon?reason=1>). The meeting was attended by 29 experts from 24 organizations in 15 countries. Mr J. Reynolds (Ireland) took the minutes which were circulated to participants, the officers of EIFAC Sub Commission I and the EIFAC Secretariat.

The Convener had distributed a set of tables for data collection pertaining to (a) descriptions of crayfish populations in Europe by species; (b) number of populations (of crayfish); (c) capture production (of crayfish); and (d) aquaculture production (of crayfish). Each country was asked to update these tables which still contained some inaccurate, poor or incomplete information. Especially data on the production and importance of crayfish as a part of inland fisheries in Europe was felt to be misleading. Therefore, the meeting approved a first recommendation from the WP to EIFAC that suggests encouraging improved collection of statistical information on freshwater crayfish species in the EIFAC member countries. Point (a) above has already been achieved and points (b) – (d) are now being addressed.

The preliminary programme of the WP, up to 2012, includes two other meetings or workshops. The second meeting of the WP will be organized in Poitiers, France, from 26 to 29 October 2010, in connection with the workshop “European Crayfish: food, flagships and ecosystem services” (by Catherine Souty-Crosset, Univ. Poitiers, France). Following the accepted general plan of activities, the subjects will be (a) the role of crayfish in ecosystems, and (b) socio-economic matters of crayfish in inland waters. The preparations are underway.

It is planned that the final workshop, which will be held in Finland in 2011, will deal with (a) responsible management, (b) communication and (c) diseases.