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Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones Unidas  
para la  
Alimentación y la  
Agricultura

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# European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission

## Twenty-seventh Session

Hämeenlinna, Finland, 24–26 October 2012

## PROJECTS SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORTS

(in alphabetical order of the first word of the project title)

### Progress report on the project “Aquatic Invasive Species in Europe”

Coordinator: Mr Joe Caffrey, Ireland

In January 2012, an EIFAAC Project Proposal was prepared and submitted to EIFAAC by Mr Joe Caffrey (Inland Fisheries Ireland, IFI). One of the primary objectives of the proposal was to ‘plan and deliver a conference to illicit best practice and to coordinate EIFAAC’s approach to aquatic invasive species’. Emerging from the conference, it is anticipated, will be a collective international expertise and a commitment to tackle the threats posed by aquatic invasive species in a concerted, coordinated and Europe-wide manner. Progress reports in relation to the Project will be forwarded to EIFAAC on a regular basis.

The new Project commenced in April 2012 and an expert group to steer and organize the conference was formed. This group comprises Mr Joe Caffrey (EIFAAC Project Coordinator; IFI), Mr Cathal Gallagher (IFI), Ms Marina Piria (University Zagreb), Mr Jaimie Dick (Queen’s University Belfast), Ms Frances Lucy (Sligo Institute of Technology, Aquatic Invasions Journal), Mr Niall Moore (Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat), Ms Cathy Maguire (European Environment Agency), Mr. Odd Terje Sandlund (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research), Ms Francesca Gherardi (University of Florence).

Following a first meeting of the expert group in May 2012, it was agreed that the conference title will be Freshwater Invasives – Networking for Strategy (FINS) and the event will be held in the Galway Bay Hotel, Galway, Ireland, between 8th and 11th April 2013.

Invited international experts will address the conference, with ample time given to panel discussion. Workshop sessions led by the keynote speakers and other experts will provide the main focus of the conference and will be arranged to facilitate involvement of all delegates in relatively small groups.

Synthesis sessions will aim to draw firm conclusions from the discussions and put forward concrete recommendations that will inform both national and international policy makers.

A number of keynote and invited speakers have been identified and invitations extended to these. A preliminary programme for the conference has been prepared. A website ([www.finsconference.ie](http://www.finsconference.ie)) has been set up for the conference.

Invitations to delegates will initially target EIFAAC focal points throughout Europe. Delegates from relevant State Departments, organizations, institutes and academic institutions in Europe, and some from farther afield, will also be invited to attend and participate at the FINS conference.

### **Progress report on the project “Development of Guidelines on the design of nature-like passes”**

Coordinator: Mr Andreas Zitek, Austria

This project is aiming at the development of a set of criteria for the design of natural fish passes for upstream migration and finding a commonly agreed definition for natural fish passes. There is a need for the project to look at different approaches to the design of natural fish passes in different countries as the design criteria used in different countries are much more heterogenic than that for “technical passes”. Future projects may include also technical types of fish passes. The ultimate purpose of the project is to produce “Guidelines” for the design of nature-like fish passes to restore connectivity for the benefit of biodiversity and fishery.

The preparation of the “Guidelines” is making good progress. There was a Project meeting arranged in connection with the Ecohydraulics Conference that took place on 17–21 September in Vienna, Austria, where some experts met and further discussed details of the work to be carried out by the Project. It has been agreed to work on common hydraulic descriptions for different types of nature-like fish passes. These different types mainly differ in the way they are dispersing energy of the water flowing downstream. As a basis for discussion, hydraulic descriptions of these types of fish passes are needed. Mr Michel Larinier (France) has prepared a draft on the construction of dispersed boulder ramps, and Mr Rolf Gebler (Germany) prepared the descriptions on uniform structure and pool type fish passes. The preparation of the description of nature-like bypass channels is ongoing. An internal draft should be ready by the end of October for internal feedback and discussion. It is expected to have a final draft ready in December and hoped that the “Guidelines” can be finalized by the end of 2012.

### **Progress report on the Joint EIFAAC/ICES project on “Eel”**

Coordinators: Mr Russell Poole, Ireland, and Mr Cedric Briand, France

The EIFAAC Working Group on Eel (WGEEL) has been active since the 1970's and acted as a major focus for collation of eel data and 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 along with a longer term decline in landings. By 1993, this decline in recruitment, along with the stock-wide reduction in landings, was leading to serious concern and since 1998, the EIFAAC Working Group has operated on a joint basis with 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). Mr Russell Poole (Ireland) and Mr Cedric Briand (France) were the convenors during the period 2010–2012.

The Working Group met three times in the inter-sessional period in Hamburg, Germany (Sept. 2010), in Lisbon, Portugal (Sept. 2011) and in Copenhagen, Denmark (Sept. 2012) and has produced a full report for each meeting. Thirty nine experts attended the 2010 meeting from fifteen countries, forty five experts

from seventeen countries in 2011, and thirty six experts from sixteen countries in 2012. In 2010, the Working Group also collaborated with an ICES Study Group on international post-evaluation of eel (SGIPEE) focussing on international stock assessment following the implementation of Eel Management Plans and also with a second Workshop on Age Reading of European and American Eel (WKAREAI).

Over the three year period, the main focus of the Working Group was in documenting the status of the European eel stock and fisheries and compiling draft scientific advice for ICES-ACOM. The WGEEL recruitment index (five year average) is currently at its lowest historical level, less than 1% for the North Sea and 5% elsewhere in the distribution area with respect to 1960–1979. Why the North Sea series dropped in the 1980s faster than elsewhere is unknown. In 2012, recruitment for the series outside the North Sea (‘Elsewhere Europe’) returned to 2007–2008 level. Recruitment of young yellow eel has been declining continuously since the 1950s.

The status of eel is critical. All anthropogenic mortality (e.g. recreational and commercial fishing, hydropower, pollution) affecting production and escapement of eels should be reduced to as close to zero as possible until there is clear evidence that both recruitment and the adult stock are increasing. In addition to documenting the status of the stock and fisheries and compiling management advice, the WGEEL 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. In 2011, the Working Group updated the eel quality database and made progress on issues relating to eel spawner quality, provided the latest information and advice on optimising stocking for conservation purposes and reviewed information pertinent to stock assessment and estimation of silver eel escapement such as natural mortality, silvering, mark-recapture, habitat and eel in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. In 2012, the WG reviewed, in anticipation of a stock-wide assessment in 2013, options for quality control and validation of reported stock indications (i.e. silver eel biomass, anthropogenic mortality rates) ranging from full check to pragmatic acceptance with some creative solutions in between, such as data score card and assessment method scenario checking. The WG, using the available new data, also reconsidered the basis for applying reference limits to eel, following the lines of standard ICES advice procedures where possible. In particular, the relationship between glass eel recruitment from the ocean and the biomass of the escaping silver eel was reconsidered, and new, appropriate indicators were suggested in the report.

#### Proposal for New Chair

Mr Martin de Graaf, the Netherlands, has volunteered to chair WGEEL for the next three years and Mr Russell Poole has offered to co-chair until after the 2013 WGEEL meeting and then Mr Alan Walker from the UK has volunteered to co-chair with Martin de Graaf for the following three years 2014–16. This stepwise handover of chairs will ensure some continuity and will also help the stock-wide assessment of eel planned for 2013, following the 2012 reporting by EU Member States.

#### Terms of Reference for 2013

Here below are presented the proposed Terms of Reference for 2013, focussing on two meetings, the first in spring reviewing available data for international stock assessment and the second in the autumn providing a full stock assessment and scientific advice.

#### ToRs of the Joint EIFAAC/ICES Project on Eels 2013

The Joint EIFAAC/ICES Project on Eels (WGEEL), chaired by Martin de Graaf, the Netherlands, and Russell Poole, Ireland, will meet in Sukarietta, Spain, 18–22 March 2013 and in ICES Copenhagen, Denmark, 5–11 September 2013, to:

In preparation for undertaking the international stock assessment, the joint EIFAAC/ICES Working Group on Eel (WGEEL) requires access to the most up to date stock indicators for each Eel Management

Unit. To achieve this, ICES will issue a data call to the EU for these data and for supporting information to facilitate quality assurance of the stock indicators.

#### Preparatory work

- a) Develop data call in conjunction with ICES for stock indicators and supporting information on local/national methods used to derive indicators;
- b) Support ICES to issue data call to MS via EU in first week of December 2012 for return deadline 1st February 2013;
- c) Collate the returns from the data call and from the Member States 2012 Reports to the EU.

#### Spring Meeting

- d) Complete the broad-brush quality assurance checking of the reported Eel Management Unit biomass and mortality estimates, and prepare the data for the international stock assessment;
- e) Provide a summary report on the reported data and stock indicators and the quality assurance of the indicators;
- f) Provide a first compilation of the best available biomass and mortality data, along with additional data from the Baltic and GFCM areas;
- g) Further develop the S/R relationship and reference points, following the ICES peer-review, and using the latest available data.

#### Autumn Meeting

- h) Evaluate the EU Regulation (EC No. 1100/2007) and its consistency with the precautionary approach, following the plan developed in WGEEL 2012;
- i) Apply the reported biomass and mortality data to the precautionary diagram using PA limits and the EU Regulation derived target/limits if different (WGEEL 2011) and provide appropriate advice on the state of the international stock and its mortality levels;
- j) assess the latest trends in recruitment, stock (yellow and silver eel) and fisheries, including effort, indicative of the status of the European stock, and of the impact of exploitation and other anthropogenic factors; analyse the impact of the implementation of the eel recovery plan on time-series data (i.e. data discontinuities). Update international databases for data on eel stock and fisheries, as well as habitat and eel quality (EQD) related data;
- k) In conjunction with WGBEC and MCWG, review and develop approaches to quantifying the effects of eel quality on stock dynamics and integrating these into stock assessments. Develop reference points for evaluating impacts on eel;
- l) Respond to specific requests in support of the eel stock recovery regulation, as necessary.

#### **Progress report on the project “Prevention and Control of Bird Predation”**

Coordinator: Mr Petri Heinimaa, Finland

The work of the Project which is acting as a liaison group since the 26<sup>th</sup> Session has concentrated on following, and participating in, the discussions and meetings on cormorant issues in different countries and especially in the Baltic Sea countries.

The EU Commission initiated in 2011 a project on Sustainable management of cormorant populations, which has a stakeholder liaison group in which also EIFAAC is represented by the Project. The EU-project opened in 2011 a website to distribute information on different cormorant issues

([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/cormorants/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/cormorants/home_en.htm)). Also the cormorant breeding colony counts were carried out in summer 2012 and the winter counts will be done in winter 2013.

In August 2011, there was a special session on Cormorants and Recreational Fisheries in Europe at the World Recreational Fisheries Congress in Berlin where the Project tried to promote the pan-European management action by an oral presentation titled 'EIFAAC and Cormorant management in Europe'.

Furthermore, the members of the Project cooperated with Intercafe-project, Baltic Sea countries, European Anglers Alliance (EAA), the DG Environment of the EU Commission, national environmental agencies and the Slovenian Fisheries Research Institute.

After a transitional period following the 26<sup>th</sup> Session in which the Project Coordinator, who is also a member of the EIFAAC Management Committee, was deeply involved in the restructuring process of EIFAAC and in preparations for the 27<sup>th</sup> Session, it is intended to intensify the technical work during the next intersessional period and to have a draft management plan developed.

### **Progress report on the project “Welfare of fishes in Aquaculture”**

Coordinator: Mr Roland Rösch, Germany

Welfare in animal (and hence also in fish) production is of increasing public concern. A recent example is "EuroTier", a large exhibition for animal husbandry and management to be held in Germany in November 2012, where welfare in animal production is of central concern with an “Animal Welfare Info Centre” (<http://www.eurotier.com/animal-welfare-center.html>) offering a platform for discussion on the issue. Hence, it is very timely for EIFAAC to produce a statement and recommendations regarding welfare of fishes in aquaculture.

The EIFAAC project on “Welfare of fishes in Aquaculture” is just starting up, with the objectives, time frame and deliverables having just been defined. The coordinator is now in the process of gathering experts involved in “welfare of fishes” who are willing to contribute to the process of developing a statement on behalf of EIFAAC and meaningful recommendations on welfare of fishes in aquaculture. As a general statement, welfare of fish in aquaculture covers not only the “well-being” of the individual fish but the whole rearing procedure from egg to market size fish. To develop recommendations on how this aim will be achieved is a main topic of the project.

It is planned to have the project fully operational as of early 2013 and to work on the definition of important “milestones” through e-mail exchange. During the second year, a workshop is intended to be held to discuss relevant topics and find a general consensus on welfare issues in aquaculture so as to develop a draft statement and recommendations. In the third year, a summary paper on the actual knowledge concerning welfare of fishes in aquaculture as well as the EIFAAC statement will be finalized.