

June 2006



منظمة الأغذية
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EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

TWENTY- FOURTH SESSION

Mondsee, Austria, 14 – 21 June 2006

PROGRESS REPORT SUB-COMMISSION III – Protection of the Aquatic Resources

Chairperson: Vacant
Vice-Chairperson: G Castelnaud (France)
Rapporteur: P. Gérard (Belgium)
Technical Secretary: U. Barg (FAO)

This Sub-Commission includes three *ad hoc* Working Parties and five Liaison Groups. Activities and achievements of the Sub-Commission during the intersessional period are summarized as follows:

1. *Ad hoc* Working Party on the Effects of Physical Modification of the Aquatic Habitat on Fish Populations

Convener: M. Zalewski

The major activities have been developed in cooperation with the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO. In 2004 the proceedings of the UNESCO IHP/ EIFAC Conference in Mondsee, 26-28 November 2003, "Ecohydrology and Physical habitat Modifications in lakes", were published as volume 4 (4) of the Journal *Ecohydrology and Hydrobiology* (editors M. Zalewski, J. Wanzenböck & P. Hickley). The issue can be downloaded at www.journal.ecohydro.pl.

In 2005 the convener of the Working Party has planned a joint session with UNESCO IHP during the European Congress of Limnology in Cracov, Poland, and during the November meeting of ecohydrology UNESCO IHP in Vienna, Austria.

No other information was received from the convener since the Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee meeting in mid 2005.

2. *Ad hoc* Working Party on the Methodologies for Rehabilitation of Lakes and Reservoirs

Convener: H. Lehtonen

The progress in Working Party on Methodologies for rehabilitation of lakes and reservoirs has been minor.

A book on Rehabilitation of Lakes and Reservoirs for Fish by Lehtonen, H. & Cowx, I.G. is planned. A draft of this document was circulated amongst the editors in May 2005. The text is considered to be in an advanced state. The figures will need to be redrawn. As discussed during the 2005 Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee, the EIFAC secretariat will look for FAO technical support for graphic design. A request for photographs was made during the 23rd Session in Wierzba but none have been forthcoming. A further request was made during the Lakes Water Framework Directive meeting in Berlin in March 2006 (see item 7 WFD liaison report) but again few have been provided. A final plea is made to EIFAC representatives and members to provide such photos to Ian Cowx who is the chief editor of the document.

Blackwell Publishing is willing to publish the document in the same format as the Rehabilitation of River for Fish Handbook (Cowx and Welcomme). As discussed during the 2005 Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee, the EIFAC secretariat will look for additional funding. The publication is now scheduled for the end of 2006.

3. *Ad hoc* Working Party on the Handling of Fishes in Fisheries and Aquaculture

Convener: A.J.P. Raat

Following the recommendations of the Session the report of the WP on Handling of Fishes in Fisheries and Aquaculture was prepared for publication as an EIFAC Occasional paper. To the report was added an overview of the present information on handling of fishes, prepared by the convener of the Working Party, Mr A.J.P. Raat and Mr P. van de Nieuwegiessen. The draft report was reviewed by Ian Cowx, Phil Hickley, Ben North and Roland Roesch. The finalization of the EIFAC Occasional Paper is proceeding. It is planned to have it published for distribution at the session in Mondsee.

The convener of the Working Party, Mr A.J.P. Raat, left Dutch Fisheries service in September 2005. Thus his place as convener of the Working Party is left vacant. Mr Raat has offered to continue his services to the Working Party as a private person, but cannot handle with a mandate from the Dutch fisheries ministry. He therefore considers that another person must take his place as the convener of the Working Party.

In 2004, the Sub-Commission decided that a document for an EIFAC position statement on handling of fishes will be prepared during the intersession. Lex Raat had indicated that he would prepare it. If not done it could be the task of the new Convener of this Working Party to start compiling a discussion paper on the position of EIFAC on the issue of handling of fishes, including the consequences for the fisheries and aquaculture sector (as requested by the 2005 EXCOM meeting).

Liaison Groups

4. Prevention and Control of Bird Predation

Convener: E. Staub

The **INTERCAFE** network includes: (i) researchers dealing with cormorant ecology and assessments of breeding/wintering status and distribution and of lethal actions taken against cormorants, (ii) researchers dealing with biological, social and cultural aspects of cormorant-fisheries conflict management (including legal, policy and economic issues) at a variety of spatial scales, (iii) policy makers (from local to international levels), (iv) local and regional end-users in charge of the implementation of conflict resolution strategies.

The official Internet website of the Wetlands International Cormorant Research Group, “Cormorants – To promote the knowledge of the ecology and life history of cormorants” (<http://web.tiscali.it/sv2001>), provides information and links to reports relevant to the prevention and control of bird predation.. The website gives a link to the online version of the final reports of the EU funded REDCAFE project.

The information on the effects of bird predation on fisheries and aquaculture is of great relevance for EIFAC. However, the convener wishes to step back from this function. There is not much that can be done at present other than to keep a watching brief on relevant information in the evolution of the European context.. The Session should decide how to proceed here. Perhaps a new person will be found who is willing to take on the tasks of the Convener for this EIFAC activity.

5. Influence of Management Practices on the Environment

Convener: M. Aprahamian

The Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee in 2005 decided to propose to the 24th Session of EIFAC to discontinue the activities of this liaison group.

6. Liaison with Council of Europe

Liaison: R. Rösch

Within the Council of Europe, the “Standing Committee of the European convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes” produced a final draft of the “Recommendation concerning farmed fish”. The document contains general ideas about the welfare of farmed fish, but does not contain species specific data. The recommendation has been adopted in December 2005. It is intended to adopt annexes on salmon and trout in December 2006 and an annex on carp in 2007.

7. Liaison Group on EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Liaison: I. Cowx / A. Raat

FAME (EU project - Development, Evaluation and Implementation of a standardised Fish-Based Assessment Method for the Ecological Status of European Rivers (see <http://fame.boku.ac.at/>).

The FAME project was successfully completed in July 2005. The methodologies were well received by the European Commission and it is likely the FAME tools will become the standard for the assessment of Fish according to the WFD. The European Commission have requested that the FAME group consult with CEN on establishing a standard for the European Fish Index (EFI). In the interim, the Commission have opened a project call to address gaps in the EFI associated with Eastern European and Mediterranean countries. Key partners of the FAME group have responded to the call to ensure the EFI is of pan-European relevance, and a decision is awaited from the Commission.

To mark the end of the FAME project and disseminate the information more widely, an international symposium on *Assessing the ecological status of rivers, lakes and transitional waters* was held in conjunction with the EIFAC and the Environment Agency of England and Wales from 11-15 July 2005, at the University of Hull International Fisheries Institute, Hull, UK (www.hull.ac.uk/hifi/). The meeting was attended by 147 experts from 31 countries and covered fish, macrophytes and macroinvertebrates as indicators of ecological status. The proceedings will be published as a special issue of *Fisheries Management and Ecology* (Fisheries aspects) and as a book through Blackwell Science later in 2006.

Members of the liaison group (Cowx, Hickley) attended a meeting in the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, Berlin, 2-3 March 2006 to discuss the practicalities of developing an EFI for lakes and review issues concerning the WFD in relation to lakes. The group

will become the focus for fisheries aspects of the WFD and will inform EIFAC of any pending issues.

Future of the liaison group. There is a need for EIFAC to be kept informed of developments relevant to fisheries associated with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. It is suggested that the present liaison group is discontinued and information on the Water Framework Directive is provided through the new information structure proposed for EIFAC.

8. Ecological and Human Health Effects from Endocrine Disrupting Substances

The Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee in 2005 considered this topic was of interest to EIFAC, but decided to propose to the 24th Session to abolish this group and include population level impacts of endocrine disruptors under “Emerging Issues”.

In general, the 2005 Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee decided to discuss the status and output from liaison groups during the 24th Session of EIFAC.