

## EAA Climate Change Position Paper 2021

1. The European Anglers Alliance recognises the profound impact-human induced carbon emissions are having on climate at a global scale and the crisis this is causing for the planet -- no more so than on the marine and freshwater environment.
2. Changes in the distribution of species as a result of climate change present both threats to existing recreational fishing, but also present opportunities for recreational fishing dependent
3. Marine and freshwater ecosystems are increasingly susceptible to cumulative impacts of: predation, habitat loss, acidification, overfishing, pollution, barriers to migration, as well as climate change. Addressing these other issues can help to mitigate the impacts of climate change on fish populations and marine and freshwater ecosystems. **EAA urges the EU to address these other impacts with more urgency as a way of mitigating the impact of climate change on marine and freshwater ecosystems.**
4. The recreational angling sector is actively involved in projects to mitigate these impacts and help build resilience in ecosystems disrupted by human induced climate change impacts. **Recognition should be given to the sector's efforts to take action at local level and EU funding should be provided to help the sector carry out more projects like these.**
5. Adaptation to changing distribution of stocks and species is essential for the recreational angling sector to survive. This can either be autonomous or directed by regulators and fisheries managers. EAA members are already in the process of adapting to changing distributions of stocks, such as in the case of Baltic cod. **We encourage the EU to be adaptable over the coming years as the impacts (known and unknown) of climate change on fisheries intensify requiring proactive and precautionary management.**
6. As the distribution of stocks change existing species may become unavailable but be replaced by other species. In some Member States, fishing-related businesses are able to take advantage of some changes that have led to desirable species moving into an area and becoming available for recreational fishing. **EU policy must support efforts by the recreational fishing sector to adapt to these new opportunities which will deliver much needed growth and employment opportunities in coastal economies.**

In some locations, autonomous adaptation has taken place. In other locations, directed assistance from governments, angling member organisations or marine managers might be needed to encourage the recreational angling community to target other species of fish or target them in different ways, or with different gear. EAA members are working with Member States to encourage directed assistance from governments. **EU funding to support this must be available to the recreational fishing sector.**

7. An increase in the occurrence of extreme weather conditions may well reduce the period suitable for (marine) angling. An improvement of number and quality of access points would counter part of the negative effect this would have on participation. **Further research into the impacts on fisheries and dependent communities of extreme climate change-related weather events should be conducted.**
8. Recreational fishing is not currently included the Common Fisheries Policy on equal footing with commercial fisheries and aquaculture. Therefore, the huge value of recreational fishing – recreational angling first and foremost - and the detrimental impacts of climate change on the recreational sector most often are overlooked or ignored by the EU policy makers and managers. **Therefore, recreational fishing should be included the Common Fisheries Policy fully and fairly at the earliest possible occasion.**
9. Recreational fishing is often excluded from climate change assessments on fish and fisheries. **Future research should include consideration of combined catches and any implications for recreational fishers.** This includes ecological, but also social and economic studies, as recreational fishing has a large part to play in well-being and in contributing to economies reliant on both marine and freshwater recreational angling participation and tourism.
10. Understanding how fish availability and catchability will change, and the likely responses of recreational fishers, is essential in ensuring that effective fisheries management is put in place under a changing climate. Marine fish stocks may migrate into deeper, colder, water in response to increasing sea temperature and acidification. However, many freshwater species, such as salmonids, do not have the ability to adapt in this way. **Funding for research in this area should be made available.**
11. Habitat protection is needed to mitigate lowering of productivity as a result of sea temperature increases. This lowering of productivity can help to be offset by restoring habitats which can support biodiversity and additional biomass in fisheries. In the case of freshwaters, temperature increases can lead to the loss of habitat for cold water fish (mostly salmonid species: trout, salmon, grayling, etc). Significant population reduction of such fish species can also be prevented by habitat protection and by abolition of negative practices in river management. **EAA supports efforts to create or restore**

**seabed and freshwater habitats in order to help build resilience in recreational fisheries against the impacts of climate change.**

12. Careful management will be required to ensure that the catches of both sectors are taken into account in stock management, and that the needs of participants in both sectors are considered. **For this reason it is important that better data on stocks status will be necessary to pro-actively and effectively manage fisheries in the future.**
  
13. Research could be focused on how to enable recreational fishers to adapt to changes in species availability, such as the use of different gears, how best to promote new locations and whether fishing for specific species should be encouraged or discouraged. **EU funding should be made available to allow this research to take place.**

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