



RESOLUTION

Save the European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) from extinction in large parts of Europe

The European Anglers Alliance, which represents 18 European nation members and more than 5 million anglers, held its 10th General Assembly on 26th – 28th March 2004 in Pont-à-Lesse, and discussed the serious decline of the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in European waters.

Eel stocks, which are of enormous commercial and ecological value, have shown continued decline across Europe for many years. Recruitment has according to ICES dropped to 1% of previous levels. In our opinion the eel stocks are under serious threat of extinction. To prevent the extinction of European eel, immediate and tough actions are necessary.

EAA issued a resolution in 2003 calling for urgent action to halt the decline in eel stocks, but the reaction from governments so far has been disappointing. In October last year the European Community issued its own action plan for the management of European eels which contains both short and long-term measures. The timetable calls for some emergency measures to be in place by the start of 2004, but so far EU member nations have been slow to take action.

The European Anglers Alliance requests:

Immediate Action

- Make sure adequate numbers of (silver)eels can escape to the sea to increase breeding stock:
 - stop all fishing for (silver)eels in the period September, October, November
 - stop the use of special fishing gear that catches (silver)eels
 - improve migration of (silver)eels
- Make sure enough elvers can migrate to nursery habitats to grow up:
 - minimize and control catches of elvers

Long-term Action

- Increased co-operation across Europe to introduce management measures that will contribute to, and secure, the long-term survival of the eel:
 - drastic reduction of commercial fisheries for eels
 - minimize and control stocking of elvers for commercial aims
 - minimize obstructions for both upstream migration of elvers and downstream migration of mature eels. In this respect hydro-power station turbines represent a major problem and any long-term plan must consequently include provisions for adequate fish passes at all hydro-power station
 - introduction of restocking programmes of elvers into areas currently showing low population densities only in combination with the removal of all obstacles for downstream migration
- Introduction of legislation to require all sales and exports of elvers and eels to be through licensed registered dealerships.
- Increased funding for survey work to accurately assess eel population dynamics in to better monitor current stock status and the effects of management plan actions.
- Increased research into *Anguillicola crassus* to determine its possible effects on mature eel migration survival.

The European eel represents an excellent indicator species and the independent *Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)* has suggested that it should be used as a principle measurement of good ecological status. EAA heartily endorses this idea.

EAA calls for designation of the European eel under Annex II or IV of the Habitats Directive. Only such a substantive measure can give the eel the protection this species deserves on a Europe-wide basis.

The European Anglers Alliance urges those responsible in all European countries and within the European Commission to acknowledge the importance of the European eel to European biodiversity and to act quickly to save this unique species from extinction.