

Measures for the Recovery of the European Eel Stock

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- *A. anguilla* is the most widespread fish stock within the ICES Area
- Eel is very socio-economically important in Europe, both in fisheries and aquaculture.

Threats

- Fishing
- Export to Asia for aquaculture
- Dams, hydroelectric turbines, pumps
- Habitat loss, chemical contamination, diseases (e.g. *Anguillicola crassus*)

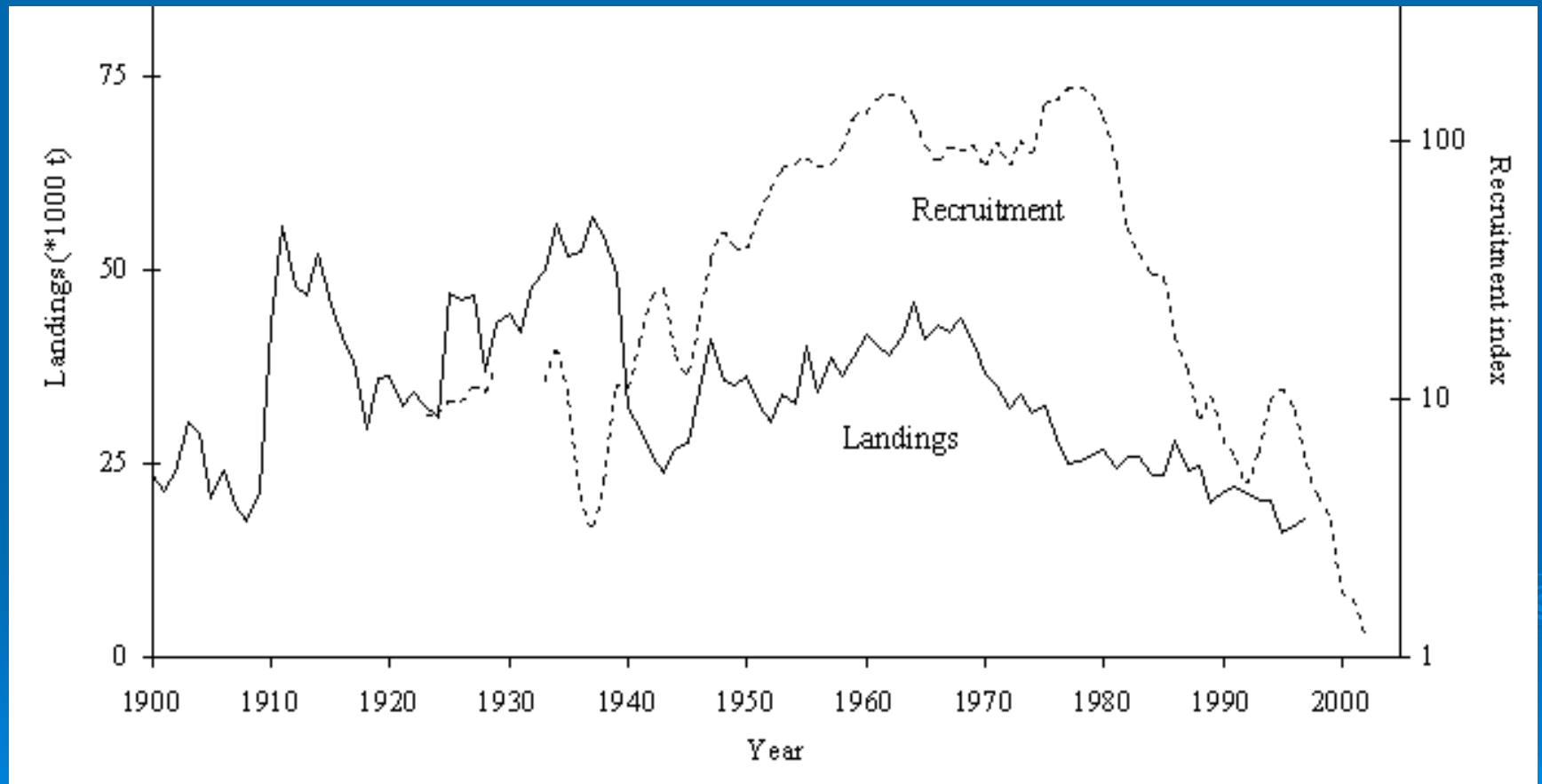
Current status of eel stock

➤ **BAD ↔ TERRIBLE !**

- Recruitment has fallen sharply since 1980
By 2001 → 1-2% of pre-1980 levels
- ICES: All information indicates that the stock is at a historical low and continues to decline.
- ICES: The fishery is not sustainable.
Recommends that exploitation and other human activities affecting eel be reduced to as close to zero as possible until a plan is implemented.

Anguilla anguilla landings and recruitment 1900-2000

Source: <http://www.ices.dk/marineworld/eel.asp>



Current Attitudes

- MS agree that the situation requires immediate action
- COM & MS recognize that the eel problem is not just a fisheries problem.
- Several sectors concerned:
 - Aquaculture, environment, h/e power industry etc.

Commission efforts towards the recovery of the European Eel stock

- 2003 - Commission presented Action Plan for management of European Eel (COM 2003, 573)
- Oct 2005 – Proposal for a *Council Regulation establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel* - COM(2005)472 final.
- April 2006 – EP proposed amendments;
- May 2006 – COM responded with amended proposal.
- 2006-2007: Intensive, in-depth discussions

The current proposal - COM (2005) 472

Geographical scope

Community
maritime waters and
inland waters of
Member States that
flow into ICES
areas III, IV, VI, VII,
VIII, IX and the
Mediterranean.



Proposal for the Recovery of
European Eel

The core of the proposal:

Tailor-made management plans

- The characteristics of river basins vary enormously:
 - Ecology
 - Biochemistry
 - Human activity (fishing, h/e power stations, dams, pollution etc.)
- Therefore each MS is asked to submit a separate **Eel Management Plan (EMP)** for each eel river basin (or one covering its entire territory).
- MS must define “eel river basins” – natural eel habitat.

Tailor-made management plans - 2

- Goal of EMP: 40% of silver eel biomass must be allowed to escape to the sea (or downstream)
- Long-term objective
- Failure to submit an adequate EMP on time → 50% reduction in fishing effort.

Tailor-made management plans - 3

- EMP's may contain, but aren't limited to:
 - fishing effort reduction (commercial and recreational)
 - restocking measures
 - structural measures / river continuity
 - combating predators
- Plans must include non-fishery measures unless these aren't necessary to attain 40% esc. target
- EMP's must indicate timescale for reaching the target and measures to be taken in the 1st year of application.
- EMP's shall be examined by STECF.

Tailor-made management plans - 4

- MS sharing a river basin are to jointly prepare plans (also with 3rd countries).
- A certain amount of glass eel caught are to be used in restocking, aiming to increase escapement of silver eel to the sea.
- EMP's will be subject to modification / improvement in view of new scientific info/data and changes in stock status.

Maritime Waters

- Catches are to be reduced by 50% relative to average catch of 2004-2006.
- Reduction to be achieved gradually over 5 years from entry into force.

Reporting and Evaluation

- MS must report to the COM every 3 years (then every 6) on:
 - The % of biomass of silver eel escaping to the sea
 - The level of fishing effort and reductions thereof
 - The mortality caused by non-fisheries factors and the reductions thereof
 - The amount of glass eel caught and the % of these used for different purposes (consumption, aquaculture, restocking etc.)
- The COM will report (after 4-5 years) to EP and Council on the outcome of the implementation of EMP's, up to that date.

Control and Enforcement

- In Community Maritime Waters: Reg. 2371/2002 (on conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the CFP) applies.
- In Inland Waters: MS may establish their own control system, adapted to their situation and legal framework already in place.
- MS will establish lists of:
 - Vessels flying their flag, fishing for eel in Community maritime waters
 - Authorizations or licenses to fish for eel in inland waters

Recent Developments in Council

- The proposal has been discussed in depth in 2006.
- 2007: Accelerated pace in the WG, DE presidency sees eel as priority, COM also.
- The proposal has evolved: some articles deleted, new articles inserted.
- Some issues remain but we are close to agreement:
 - **Possible adoption by Council April 16-17th**

Recent Developments in Council

- **Please note - that the proposal has been evolving and its content may change before final adoption by the Council!**
- **Possible adoption by Council April 16-17th**