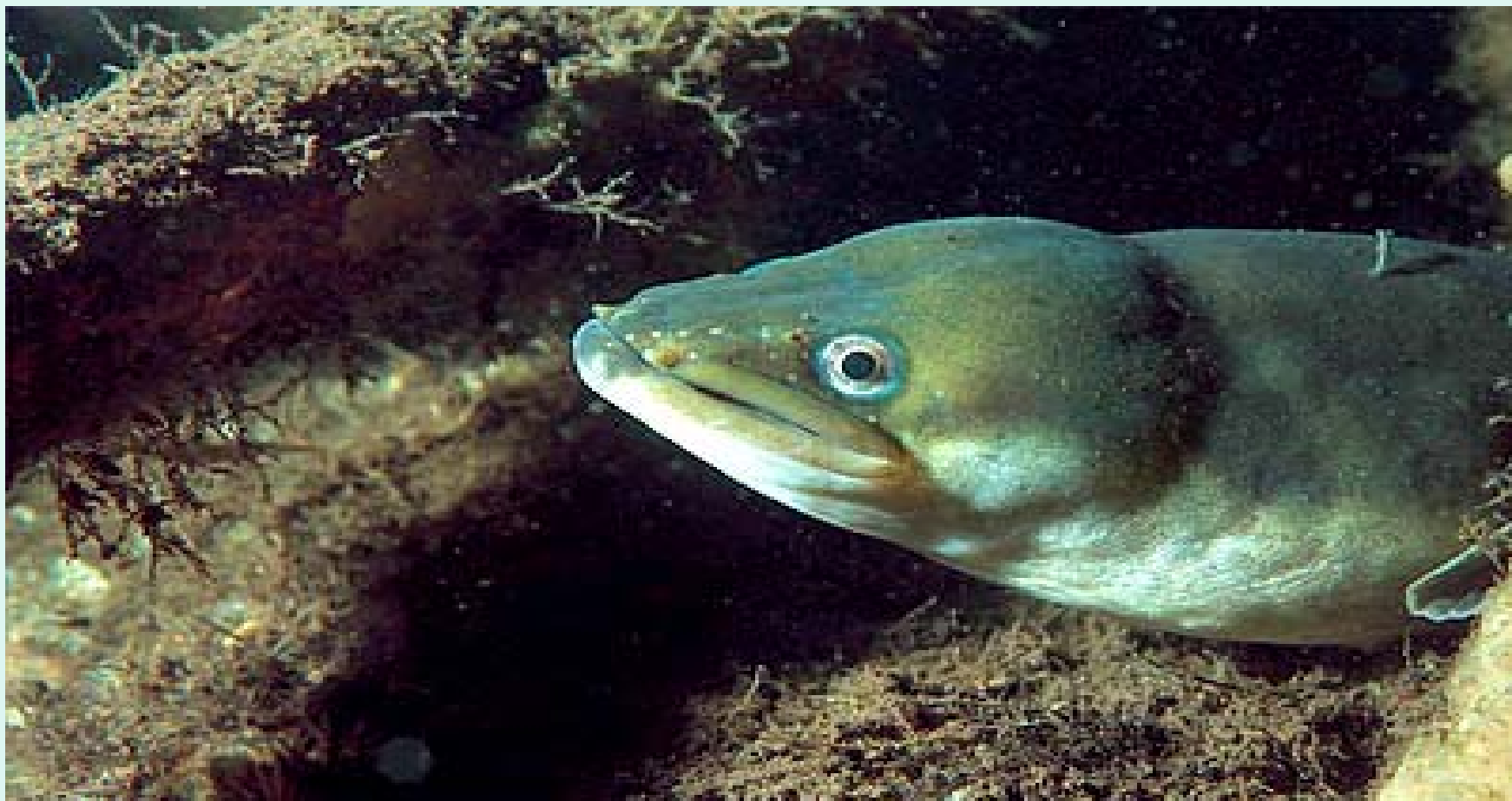




Management of the eel population in the Netherlands the light of the proposed European escapement targets for silver eel

Arjan Heinen

Combinatie van Beroepsvissers













Since 1999 new inland fisheries policy

- Professional fishers and organized anglers have to manage fisheries jointly in Fisheries Management Boards (*around 30 FMB have to be established covering all major water systems*)
- National legislation will be minimized
- Aim is a level of co-management where government facilitates and interferes only when things get out of hand (criminal poaching)
- Fisheries management should fit into the European Water Framework

Fisheries Management Boards (FMB) and eel management who has the right to fish?

Access regulations:

1. If a professional fisher or an angler wants to fish inside the area managed by the Fisheries Management Board he/she has to:
 - Be an owner (or have a lease agreement) of fishing rights (hectares) within that area or
 - Have a permit to fish from the owner of fishing rights.
2. If you want to use other gears than the fishing rod you have to own (or rent) 250 ha of water and an income of 8500 euro from fishing.

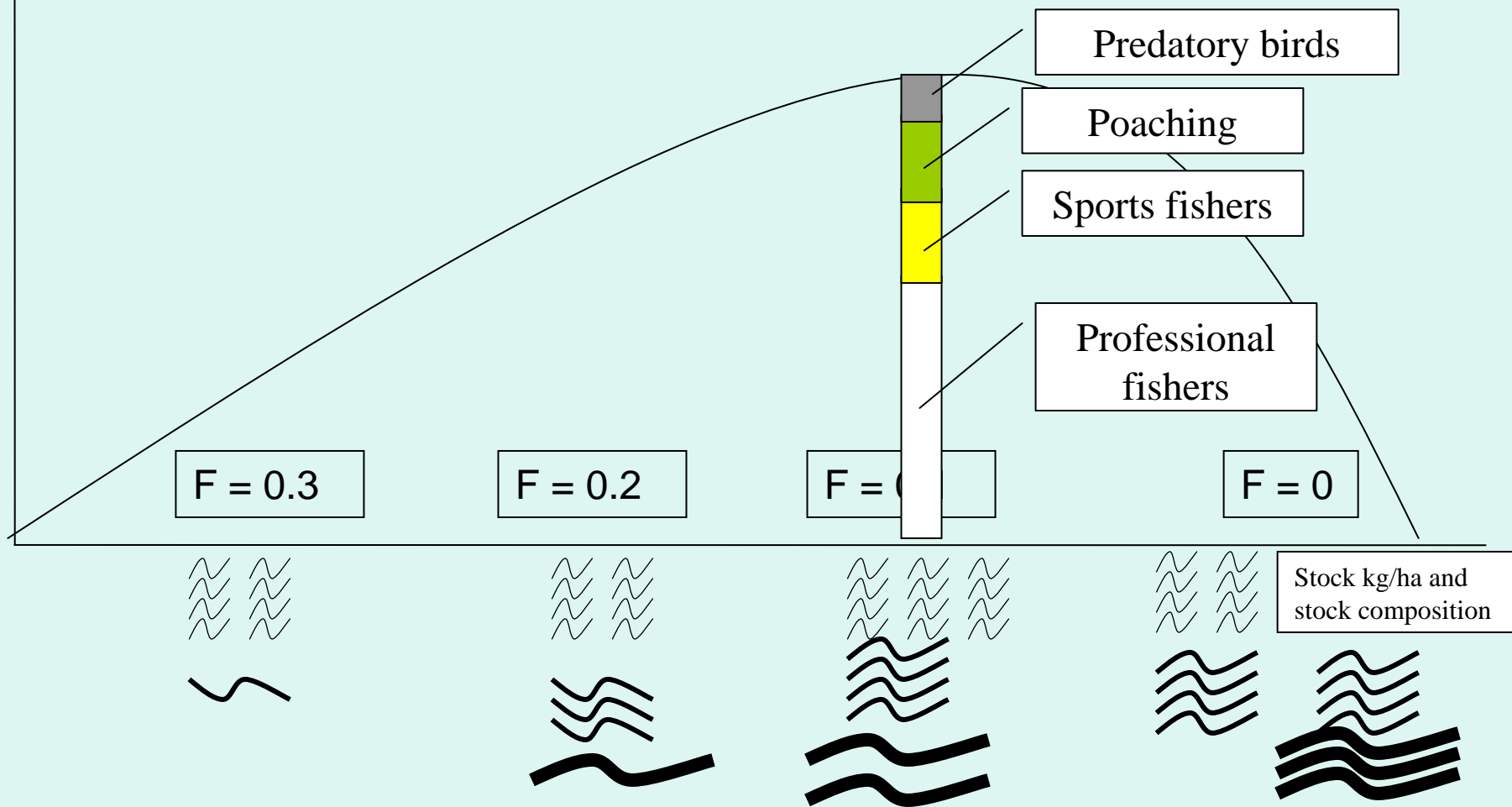
Fisheries Management Boards (FMB) and eel management

Agreed guidelines in order to come to an agreement between professional fishers and organized anglers:

1. Length composition of the stock and total stock biomass are the only two factors that the FMB can manage (through harvest and stocking) to optimize sustainable harvestable production from the water
2. Agreements on the stocks to be maintained are the fundamentals under the fisheries management plan.
3. Which party gets what share of the sustainable harvestable production is determined after the agreement on optimal stock composition are made.

Sustainable
harvestable
production
of yellow eel
(kg/ha/year)

Communication on eel fisheries in FMB



Female silver eel production and harvest

Sustainable
harvestable
production
of yellow eel
(kg/ha/year)

Guideline on national level in the Netherlands:
15% of the yellow eel (in number) in the
landings of sports and professional fishers
should be larger than 50 cm

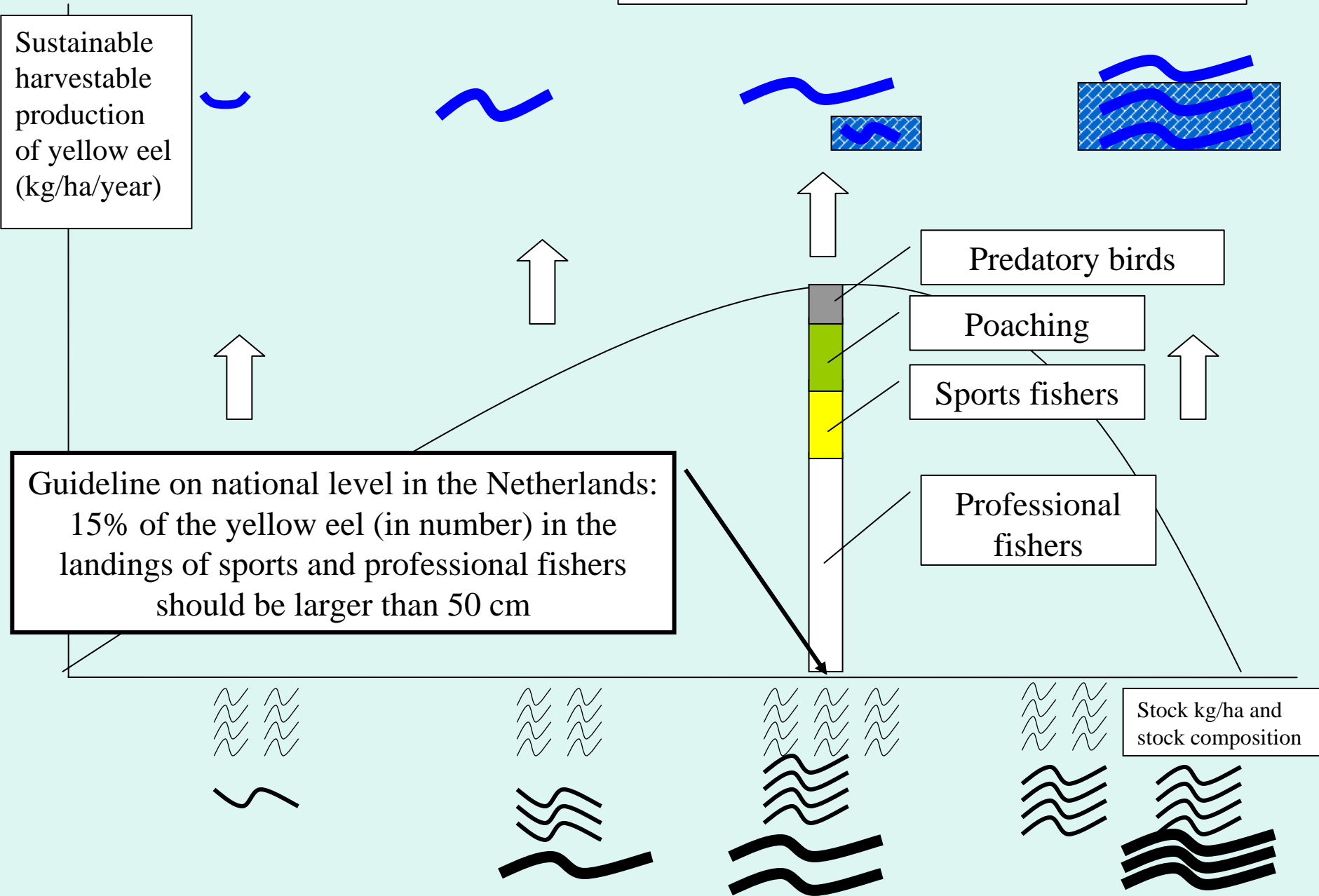
Predatory birds

Poaching

Sports fishers

Professional
fishers

Stock kg/ha and
stock composition








Nederlands Beheerplan Aal

Eindrapport
November 2005

Tabel 3 Schematisch overzicht van de voorgestelde voorlopige norm, en de bijbehorende beheersmaatregelen. Genoemde percentages hebben betrekking op het aantal dieren in de onttrokken vangst, niet hun gewicht.

Beheersmaatregel			
	< 15 %	15 – 20 %	> 20 %
% rode aal > 50 cm van de onttrokken vangst			
% schieraal > 50 cm van de onttrokken vangst			
			
	Beperking visserij	Geen uitbreiding	Evt. uitbreiding

Two pilot areas will hopefully provide data on:

- Natural mortality of recruited glass eel or young yellow eel
- Fisheries mortality of yellow eel through angling and professional fishing
- Growth rate of the eel in the specific system
- Silver eel production
- Escapement level of silver eels

Methods: catch and effort records, cohort-analysis of stocked small eels and/or mark-recapture experiments of yellow and silver eels (including individually recognizable tags)

Important

- Pilots should lead to a joined understanding of the fisheries management to be implemented. Understanding between professional fishers and representatives of the aglers.
- Pilots should lead to a joined understanding of the needed management of the environment (migration, water quality and **quality of the sediments**) between fishers and water managers

Question:

Experimenting with pilots and scaling them up needs time. Do we have time?

Yes, the eel has the strength to wait for another 10 years before substantially more good quality silver eels migrate to the Sargasso sea

No, the European eel is surviving on past generations of good recruitment and stocking of glasseel.

If we do not have time to experiment with pilots. Can we buy time?

Suggestion to buy time by:

1. Subsidizing extra silver eel escapement from good quality areas
2. Subsidizing stocking of glasseeel into high quality areas where fishing effort is reduced in such a way that total catch is fixed to present (pre-stocking) catch.

Protect the eel, eat some of
them

And pay fisher-managers a fair
price