

Attendees

Andrew Kerr (chair)	Richard Fordham	Chris Leftwich	Peter Wood	Brian Knights
David Bunt (notes)	Alex Koelewijn	Julian Jones	Matt Gollock	Corine Rozendaal
Andy Don	Miran Aprahamian	Barry Bendall	Garry Hillier	

Action**1. Apologies and Welcome**

Andrew welcomed the Group, particularly the longer distance travellers, and thanked Matt Gollock for ZSL's hospitality. Apologies were received from: Peter Neusinger, Alan Walker, Alistair Maltby, and Andrew Morgan.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting June 2012

Agreed as a true record subject to spelling corrections for Vicki Crook and Corine Rozendaal

3. Updates and Matters Arising**3.1 Progress Publishing the Pawson Report**

Agreed to be published on the website etc.

Andrew**3.2 Update on IUCN**

To be provided by Matt Gollock

Matt**3.3 CITES latest thinking on illegal trade**

Brian reported no change in opinion. To forward the e-mail for information

Brian**3.4 Defra's Report to the Commission**

Miran presented the Defra report provided to the Commission. Miran will circulate the presentation. Some key points:

Miran

- In the UK approx 230 t silver eel escapement lost due to obstructions, abstraction etc. and a similar amount lost to fishing
- 300 passes have been constructed by the EA across England and Wales
- SEG to write to Defra to express opinions about the report, via structured process. People interested in being involved: Matt, Peter, Brian, Julian, Barry, David, Alan. Miran will organise. Andrew will chair.
- Peter to write to ICES re proportions / quotas in France etc

Miran**Peter****3.5 Report from ICES Copenhagen meeting**

Alan to please provide a briefing note

Alan**3.6 Update from DUPAN (plus eels over the dyke)**

- Alex gave an overview of the Eels Over the Dyke programme. However the Dutch government is delaying plans to provide solutions to barriers
- Alex also reported on the assessment of eel farms and smokeries in Holland which will increase membership of SEG and the amount of sustainable eel in the market

3.7 Meetings WWT, Bristol Zoo and Wetlands International

Andrew gave an update on meetings with partners:

- WWT (At Steart Point on the Severn) are to managed a vast reclaimed wetland and make it eel friendly especially for nursery habitat.
- Bristol Zoo (Jen Nightingale) also keen via common habitat interest with crayfish to promote eel recovery and a grouping is emerging all along the lower Severn led by the Rivers Trust. Bristol Zoo and several Wildlife Trusts

3.8 Set date for small group to develop SEG advice to Commission

- Christos would like advice from SEG on what are effective, low cost solutions for accelerating the eels recovery. A sub-group required to draw this together. To comprise:
Matt, Andy, Barry, Alex, Richard **Andrew**
- Andy and Andrew to confer on standards and guidelines for eel passes **Andrew**

3.9 SEG Italy meet at Orbatello Lagoon 12/13 October

- Partners in Tuscany have succeeded in obtaining funds to stock the lagoon and operate according to the Sustainable Eel Standard.
- Rodolfo in Spain has started to lead some of the fisheries in Spain towards the standard

3.10 Photographs and records of eel catches 2012

- Garry Hillier presented information on eel catches. Has also presented the information to the Prime Minister and the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Owen Paterson
- Catch per unit effort suggests that stock has remained reasonably constant in the Thames In the period 1980 – 2011
- If you would like copies of the eel Fisherman's Association newsletter, please e-mail the Association at: ukefa@btinternet.com **All**

3.11 KLAWA Silver Eel Pumping Station By-Pass System

Andy Don showed a video of an innovative system to aid Silver Eels to be deflected from pump intakes. Please see the clip at the following website:

http://www.klawa-gmbh.de/geschaeftsfelder/oekologische_wasserkrafttechnik/aalabstieg.php?lng=en&cs=013015011

3.12 Andy Don also offered to be involved in helping with technical input into 'eel passage and easement' documentation. The following are links to existing EA information:

[eel passes](#) [screening solutions](#)

4. **Delivering the EFF Conservation Project**

4.1. Review actions from B'ham meet on EFF grant

- A successful start-up meeting. All in progress. Development of Standard and payment of expenses to be done via the Programme Manager

4.2. The ToR for Glass Eel measurement in the Severn

- Miran presented the outline of the forthcoming study to be carried out in the Severn RBD (includes Severn, Wye, Usk, Parrett). Objective is to better understand the Glass Eel recruitment, exploitation and possibly mortality rates in this area. Intention is to repeat every 3 years depending on funding. 1st report this December. **Miran**

4.3. Restocking Strategy

- Time did not permit this to be discussed. Barry and Alistair to lead as part of EFF programme **Alistair**

4.4. First Thoughts on Europe Wide Bid with multiple partners

- Time did not permit this to be discussed. SEG is drawing together partners from across Europe to make a large scale bid for funding conservation and eel recovery activities. Lessons learnt in UK would be applied **Andrew**

4.5 Other updates

- Richard Fordham reported on a recent review of eel mortality and escapement in Sweden, and how the WWF position on *stopping fishing* as the only policy option has eased very slightly (they are starting to realise the contribution of other impacts)

5. **SEG Membership** proposed document for adoption outlining the next steps in membership management

- The proposal was agreed in principle. The main merits to have a base of people and organisations signed up to SEG objectives. A strong possibility that a voluntary membership secretary could be found, reducing the administration costs. Discussion re companies not paying twice where there is already a commercial contribution.
- Agreed: proceed with membership as proposed and discuss further partnership contributions with key partners. Chris and Andrew to develop and share an options appraisal. Also need to consider other income streams – eg. grants, Govt. **Chris / Andrew**

6. **Progress on the Adoption of the Eel Standard**

6.1 Latest news on uptake of the standard, from France, Holland, Spain, Italy, Greece and Bulgaria

- Dutch smokeries and farms are currently being assessed. Some interest from other countries mentioned above

6.2 Progress on the ToR for MEP to revise the standard in the light of the pilot certification, stakeholder review and the use of the sustainable word all as part of EFF project.

- These were taken as read and will be overseen by the Eel Standard sub-group **David**

6.3 Immediate additional paragraph for the standard to emphasise commitment to sustainability as part of trying to solve the problem of illegal trading and actions to circumvent the Eel Regulation (draft circulated prior to meeting and it has been to the standard committee).

- Agreed in principle but agreed that reference to requirement of membership of SEG be removed and careful consideration of statement: *'All its trading and commercial relationships are aligned with SEG goals'*. To be considered further by the Review Group **David / Jo**

6.4 Immediate additional paragraph to the Guidance Note. No 25 Remedial Action (draft circulated prior to the meeting and it has been to the standards committee)

- Agreed in principle, according to the generic process provided, though some difficulties over some elements of detail, eg. how would the Panel be informed, who would pay for re-assessment, what is the level of evidence and proof required. To be resolved by the Review Group taking into account these queries. **David / Jo**

6.5 What is the SEG view on the issue of eating glass eels as a table food? Is this sustainable? What guidance would SEG give to an assessor when faced with the trade in dead eels?

- Discussion: The Group were in principle opposed to glass eels being used for the table as this is not good use of the stock. However, it is a traditional practice (community = part of sustainability triangle). Glass eels direct for the table is not currently covered by the Standard. It could be a

better use of dead glass eels to use them for consumption than to dispose of them. Could come within the 10% mortality currently allowed? Or we could revise the Standard to permit a % for consumption as long as a % is going for restocking?

- Eel Standard Review Group to consider further in their review.

David / Jo

6.6 Proposed agreement with DUPAN (draft circulated prior to meeting)

- Time did not permit this to be discussed.

Your views are sought by email to Andrew

7. **Business Plan 2012 to 2015 (Draft)**

- Time did not permit this to be discussed.

Your views are sought by email to Andrew

8. **Financial position and Budget for 2012 to 31 Feb 2013**

Peter Wood presented the current financial position which illustrated the need for urgent action to strengthen the income stream notably around membership and the royalty (from sale of sustainable eel) as well as other forms of income. Delivering the Business Plan will only be possible if the resources plan can prime the investment. Whilst several routes were examined the reality is that more income is to be sourced from all sources.

9. **Key dates Going Forward**

BBC Countryfile Sunday 23 Sept

Living North Sea Conference 13-15 November in Newcastle

Date of next meeting Tuesday 15th Jan 2013