

# The Sustainable Eel Group

Minutes of the meeting 28 September 2010, 11:00-15:00, Bishops Stortford

Please see Appendix 1 for Attendance List

Notes	Action
<p><b>1. Welcome, introductions &amp; apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andrew Kerr welcomed the group, to include an impressive array of European guests</li> <li>Apologies received are listed with the attendance list, Appendix 1.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Governance</b> – work has progressed between meetings and will now report at next meeting. Include comments recently received from Vin.</li> <li><b>Resources</b> – Bank Account now in place, so requests for funds can now be made. £12,400 has been promised so far. Accounts are published on the website</li> <li><b>Eating Eel Position statement</b> – published on the website. Brian Knights will also work on a set of standard Frequently Asked Questions to help correct a lot of the myths reported in the press. Brian and Andrew will liaise on improvements to the website</li> <li>Previous minutes to be corrected to include comments provided by Vin Fleming</li> <li><b>EMP Delivery</b> – project underway to identify amount of available habitat for Eel in the UK – expect to be ready the end of March 2011. This will enable habitat improvement work to be targeted best.</li> <li><b>IUCN</b> – Peter Wood and Brian Knights visited IUCN. Had constructive meeting. IUCN has since committed to addressing a number of the queries raised, given the pressure the red-listing (“Critically Endangered”) has caused and recognising that that the assessment was developed by 2 people. They will call a meeting of their freshwater fisheries group to conduct the review. Consensus was that SEG should support (rather than “challenge”) IUCN to proceed with the review, to ensure the listing is based on sound science. SEG could offer expertise to IUCN to assist with the review. BK will provide David with some IUCN names. A big thank you to Brian and Peter for their visit and feedback</li> </ul>	<p>DB</p> <p>BK</p> <p>BK, AK DB</p> <p>BK/DB</p>
<p><b>3. Sustainable Eel Standard</b></p> <p><b>The following is a reflection of some of the comments made in a very useful debate about the draft standard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andrew expressed thanks to Jo Gascoigne for her great effort on drafting the standard</li> <li>Such a standard could assist the EA in discussions with Defra who is considering the future of all Eel fisheries in England &amp; Wales</li> <li>Debate over whether a % of unsustainable eel in a batch could be eligible for the Standard (ie. if all fishermen went sustainable tomorrow, the European eel farmers will still have proportion of unsustainable stock for the next 3 years as the fish move through their tanks). Could we operate some form of transitional period? Other options were discussed eg. standard to say eg. 75% from sustainable sources - works OK for ingredients in Fairtrade Coffee but not whole fish.</li> <li>Strong consensus that the standard must be credible to be of any use.</li> <li>Will need a pilot to test it and a consultation period, which will take time.</li> <li>EMPs – believed insufficient data yet so say that any catchments have EMP approved and 40% escapement. However, this is what is agreed from the established EU standard, so we should base it on this best available information</li> <li>AK – suggested that we may need to work with a developing standard – it will be</li> </ul>	

<p>impossible to introduce a “Rolls Royce” standard on Day 1, ie start with an expectation that it will evolve over 3 – 5 years (but with an up-front statement to say that this is what we will do)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW – 40% is great in theory – but we have hardly anywhere that we can measure with that degree of accuracy. AW uncomfortable with a transitional standard</li> <li>• Maybe the 2 levels (green, amber) could reflect that transition.</li> <li>• Make the Green/amber/red definitions clearer</li> <li>• Consider flagging some criteria as “pre-conditions” or “show-stoppers” – eg. the 40% escapement target would be a given that could not be trumped by any other criteria.</li> <li>• BK – should we start simple and go with only the 40% target to begin with? Then expand the standard in 2010?</li> <li>• Care over the size of the unit, as in some cases, whole countries rather than river catchments have an EMP.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions &amp; agreements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All to provide any further comments to Jo to enable her to progress to the next draft of the Standard by Friday 8 October.</li> <li>• Some of those present could conduct a self-assessment to see how they might fare against the draft standard.</li> <li>• Members of the Standards Sub-Group: David Bunt (to Chair), Alan Walker (not as Cefas), Brian Knights, Arjan Heinen, Matt Gollock, Richard/Morten + Jo Gascoigne</li> <li>• A philosophical discussion about the Eel industry concluded that we are all interested in the future of the eel – for commercial, socio-economic and conservation reasons.</li> <li>• Aim to develop &amp; implement the standard as soon as possible, ideally to implement pilots within a few months. This would enable influencing the French as soon as possible. Has to be done with the right balance of speed and credibility. Could consider developing a code of practice to support the Standard and/or to use in advance of the Standard. The immediate priority is to achieve sustainable glass eel fisheries.</li> <li>• In commenting to Jo by 8 October: All to comment on whether one assessor is suitable</li> <li>• And whether it is suitable for Jo to be an assessor</li> <li>• Sub-group also to consider how/where any logo is used – who is the end-user – eg. supermarkets, re-stocking.</li> <li>• Also need a succinct definition of what “Sustainable Eel” means, to support the 20 page document and communications with customers and the media.</li> <li>• We’ll also need to consider charges for use of the logo</li> <li>• And we’ll have to consider if/how to certify assessors</li> <li>• SEG will own the standard; the sub-group will be responsible for developing and reviewing it.</li> <li>• Sub-group to set a timetable for development &amp; implementation – next draft to be ratified at the next SEG Board meeting (December) for subsequent public consultation, lobbying &amp; pilot immediately after.</li> <li>• The standard might even influence WWF to be more supportive of SEG’s objectives</li> </ul>	<p>JG</p> <p>All</p> <p>JG/DB</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>JG/DB</p> <p>JG</p>
<p><b>4. SEG logo</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any further comments to Matt on the logo by 8 October.</li> <li>• Main comments: will say the full name, use the square version, make the eel look more like an eel; see how can use the same logo for the Group and the Standard</li> </ul>	<p>All</p> <p>MG</p>
<p><b>5. News Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW: The European Commission and Cites is reviewing the approach to exports (including whether to permit export of Glass Eels outside of Europe) and the scale of fishing effort for the coming two seasons. No agreement has yet been reached.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A French delegation of fisherman are meeting European Officials to make their case and press for the same export quota as last year of 14.5 tonnes to Asia. Frederic Rembert was not invited (he is seen as supportive of sustainable fishing and reduced exports)</li> <li>• National Anguilla Club – Andrew received comments from the Group regarding their resignation and will respond to Mark Salt.</li> <li>• Andrew Morgan of the Fishmongers Company wishes to join SEG.</li> <li>• BK: new Eel byelaws have been introduced by the EA. It includes a more flexible and controllable system of “Authorisations” rather than licences.</li> <li>• RF: Sweden has been restocking for many years. Funding from Govt to enable this as part of its EMP. 21 – 27% of silver eels caught in the Baltic are from restocking.</li> <li>• ML: Denmark – eel farmers have been concentrating on PR – educating people what we do; status report on eel from University; Govt. have funded doubling the number of eels for re-stocking; also stocking in brackish water</li> <li>• AH: Netherlands – setting up partnership between fishermen and fish-farmers &amp; developing something similar to the SEG Standard; angling &amp; conservation organisations are collaborating to try to influence the termination of eel fishing. Anglers can no longer eat eel in Holland</li> <li>• AKs: Germany – restocking season almost closed, EMPs about to be approved, monitoring about to start; this year the first time we couldn’t use natural catches for re-stocking; a media campaign with minister to help inform public opinion</li> <li>• France: national production quota unknown / awaited; re-stocking in France on hold due to legal action by Angling federation as they don’t want glass eel fishing &amp; restocking to take place, and want them to move freely. Anglers can eat eel in France</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">AK AK/DB</p>
<p><b>6. A case for SEG Europe?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus that European countries must collaborate to stand any chance of our collective objectives being achieved, so we should continue to work together.</li> <li>• Agreed that we keep in e-mail &amp; other electronic communication and have an annual collaborative face-to-face meeting</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">AK</p>
<p><b>7. Next steps &amp; next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next meeting Weds 15<sup>th</sup> December, probably at ZSL London. Matt Gollock &amp; David Bunt to arrange</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">MG, DB</p>

## Appendix 1. Attendance List and apologies for absence

<b>Present:</b>	Andrew Kerr	(AK)	Independent (Management Consultant)	(Chair)
	Brian Knights	(BK)	Independent (Fisheries Scientist)	
	Miran Aprahamian	(MA)	Environment Agency	
	Matthew Gollock	(MG)	Eel Conservation Group / Zoological Society London	
	Peter Wood	(PW)	UK Glass Eels	
	Alistair Maltby	(AM)	Association of Rivers Trusts	
	Darren Tansley	(DT)	The Wildlife Trust (Essex) (for Julian Jones)	
	Alan Walker	(AW)	Cefas	
	Peter Neusinger	(PN)	Eeline Aquatrading	
	Jo Gascoigne	(JG)	Fisheries Scientist MEP Consultant	
	Keith Wilson	(KW)	City of London Port Authority	
	Chris Leftwich	(CL)	Fishmongers Company	
	Morten Lauritzen	(ML)	Jupiter Eel representing (Denmark)	
	Arjan Heinen	(AH)	Nevepaling representing (Holland)	
	Kate Rémy	(KR)	Gironde Fishermen's co-operative (France)	
	Dominic Gomes	(DG)	Gironde Fishermen's co-operative (France)	
	Frederic Rembert	(FT)	Gironde Fishermen's co-operative (France)	
	Richard Fordham	(RF)	Scandinavian Silver Eel representing (Sweden)	
	Arne Koops	(AKs)	Deutscher Fischerei Verband Aalversandstelle (Germany)	
	David Bunt	(DB)	Institute of Fisheries Management	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Roger Castle	(RC)	Eel Fisherman	
	Vin Fleming	(VF)	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	
	Mark Salt	(MS)	National Anguilla Club	
	Julian Jones	(JJ)	Radnor Wildlife Trust	
	Andy Don	(AD)	Environment Agency	
	Christopher Moriarty	(CM)	Retired Fisheries Scientist former Chair ICES EIFAC	
	Tom Fort	(TF)	Author	
	Janina Gray	(JG)	Salmon and Trout Association	
	Laky Zervudachi	(LZ)	Direct Seafoods	
	William Swinkles	(WS)	Nivis (Dutch Eel Farmer)	
	Derek Evans	(DE)	Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, Northern Ireland	
	Father P. Kennedy	(PK)	Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative	
	Joost Blom	(JB)	Biomar	
	John van Dooren	(JvD)	Nutrigo / Trouw Nutrition	
	Paul Knight	(PK)	Salmon & Trout Association	