

**Notes**

**Action**

**1. Welcome, introductions, apologies & opening address**

- Andrew welcomed the Group and introduced new people
- At the last meeting Andrew said SEG as an organisation was maturing and was expecting to launch a round of work and have some resources for administration. However, we are still awaiting the outcome of the EFF bid which would have provided significant funding to enable SEG's work programme

**2. Notes of the last meeting (2 November 2011)**

- Any corrections, please advise David All
- All to note actions and progress All

**3. Progress reports**

- IUCN Specialist Eel Sub-Group. Matt Gollock is leading the development of this work. We have a good breadth of expertise and geographical representation from around the world. 1st conference call is next week where we will introduce objectives and set priorities. A number of SEG members are involved. Membership was shown on the screen and will be shared, to include publication on the website. Matt  
Claire
- Fishing Season.
  - Catches in France approx double of last year and fishing effort continues to fall sharply is from some 1800 boats 10 years ago to some 600 now
  - Early catches are similar possibly in UK, though too early to conclude yet
  - In France, 80% of the market now controlled by a monopoly. Given the good catches, this has skewed the market. *A.japonica* is selling at 23,000 euros / kilo The margin on *A.anguilla* is believed to be £1000 / tonne, which is believed to be fuelling illegal exports. The quota is complete.
  - Hence, greed in France is potentially threatening the Sustainable agenda with a knock-on effect across Europe on the availability of sustainably caught eel
- Netherlands & Dupan.
  - Alex Koelewijn gave an overview of the work of Dupan, which is a Sustainable Eel Foundation in the Netherlands.
  - Dupan's objectives are very similar to SEG's – to help the eel, progress EMPs, pursue sustainable use of the stock (the objective of the EU regulation), progress research, progress conservation projects
  - 15,000 barriers to migration in the Netherlands
  - Their research suggests that restocking is very effective, and 20 – 100 times more effective than doing nothing. This is particularly true in the Netherlands where river systems are closed from the sea due to barriers.
  - Paper on stocking & survival will be published soon and will be circulated to the Group. Alex
  - Dupan administers an eco-label which is generating funding to help the eel – restocking , research and conservation projects
  - Several dutch conservation groups are opponents of Dupan's work as they believe (a) they represent commercial interests only and (b) they believe that

the only management tool is to stop eel fishing. It is possible that they are awaiting to see the outcome of Dupan's work before taking a view and deciding to engage.

- Their impact on the Dutch eel management plan was to prevent fishing and this prevented the catching and transport of eels over barriers and into the sea, confining them to their fate in these closed systems and pumping stations
- Polarisation appears to be greatest in Holland. Dutch Govt. is supportive of Dupan's work and encouraging the parties to talk
- Dupan is supporting their members in the adoption of the Sustainable Eel Standard all 19 smokeries are going for assessment in March and April. DUPAN has offered to fund all 17 farms
- Their work recognises that the industry is an integral part of the future of the eel. The industry must be and is conservation led in order to maintain the industry
- Dupan has agreed to provide SEG 5% of their fund to assist SEG's work - especially eg. in influencing Brussels etc.
  
- Sweden.
  - Have obtained the glass eels and expect to be restocking as much this year as last.
  - The number of turbines in Sweden means that over 95% of migrating silver eels are killed.
  - More research planned to see how they can reduce mortality at turbines. Trap and transport is being adopted to move eels to the sea
  - Early indications from the Eeliad project suggest that restocked eels have a similar migration pattern to wild eels, though awaiting paper to be published
  - Have tried to contact Greenpeace Sweden but have had no reply after several attempts
  
- Germany.
  - 28,000 dams and weirs in Germany. German Govt. not agreeable to a programme of work to improve this as (a) will affect their turbines and the ability to generate renewable energy and (b) will affect the local users rights
  - Govt. to fund re-stocking of 30M eels in Germany
  
- Denmark.
  - Restocking programme is continuing
  - Also research to see the fate of restocked fish is progressing
  - WWF Denmark, like Holland, don't accept the Bruntland definition of Sustainability. They are using ICES who seem to be moving towards being less favourable to re-stocking
  - Communication with them is as difficult as it is in Holland
  - Likewise, they are pressing retail markets to say that "Sustainable Eel" is not possible
  
- UK.
  - The Llangorse Lake trap operated in the autumn. No silver eels were caught which may have been due to low water levels, or an indication that there are no longer any eels in the lake.
  
- Science / Edinburgh.
  - A number of us are attending the World Fisheries Congress in Edinburgh in May.

- MedWet conference. Andrew reported on his recent visit to the Mediterranean Wetlands Conference.
  - 50% of wetlands in the Mediterranean has been destroyed in the past 20 years
  - 400 people from 40 countries attended
  - The conference was very interested in the sustainable eel agenda, as part of a way to improve the sustainability of Mediterranean wetlands
  - Eels in the Med have shorter generations so a focus on them could potentially accelerate regeneration
- Publicity.
  - Several programmes have provided educational publicity for the eel, including: – Autmumnwatch, ARTE and Al-Jazeera.

#### 4. Eel Management Plan Review 2012 and revision to 11//2007

- Position across Europe.
  - European agencies are in the process of responding to Brussels to report on progress on Eel Management Plans
  - Environment Agency (England & Wales) EMP Review will be submitted in June 2012
- What should SEG be seeking to influence?
  - A definitive position on re-stocking is required – who could commission and do it? EU is the ideal body to commission it – perhaps ICES the body to do it? MG, BB
  - The key question on re-stocking is "what would happen if we did nothing" - ie. left the glass eels in situ - what we need to determine is the net benefit of stocking glass eel - in assessing any benefit we need to also include any losses from fishing, transport and storage (before they are stocked) - not just look at the survival of glass eel once stocked
  - Sub-group are going to discuss next week on how to progress this Matt
  - How to respond to the review of the EMPs in 2013.
  - SEG to decide its own positions – eg. would it agree to fishing or a ban on fishing where a river basin is failing the 40% target. Volunteers: Brian, David, Matt, Peter, Barry/Alistair, Richard (if after June, Matt to lead). Alan & Miran can be consulted
  - Need to influence ICES to act after many years of talking
- EA update on Screening.
  - Andy Don gave an update on the Environment Agency's programme in England & Wales:
  - Study showed there are 26,000 obstructions and 19,000 water abstractions. These were prioritised for their impact
  - Of these, 676 were high priority obstructions, of which EA owns 185
  - 798 were highly critical abstractions, of which 243 "very high"
  - EA programme is to resolve the most critical ones by 2015, and everything by 2027
  - Obstructions can be solved quite easily with relatively cheap materials
  - Worse are abstractions, especially eg. getting fish friendly pumps or behavioural screening at pumping stations
  - Environment Agency has a lot of own pumping stations and so is doing pilot studies to identify the best solutions for them
  - Andy demonstrated a new and very cost-effective "stud substrate" which has been developed and can be provided as 500mm square tiles to help eels migrate over weirs and other barriers
  - Approx 200 passes have been installed by the EA and Rivers Trusts over the

past 2 years. Advise on exact nos. to aid publicity on progress and to help inform other countries how they can adopt good value solutions

- An interesting paper mentioned in discussion is attached to these notes entitled: *"Habitat carrying capacity is reached for the European eel in a small coastal catchment: evidence and implications for managing eel stocks"*
- All these technologies will be reported in the Living North Sea report (provide link for website: <http://www.livingnorthsea.eu/> )

Miran  
Barry/  
Alistair,

Claire

## 5. Eel Monitoring in the River Wandle, South London, using Didson

- Liefy Hendrikz of the Zoological Society of London presented the results of a survey of the River Wandle, done in partnership between the Environment Agency and ZSL.
- She concluded that Didson counters could be used to monitor spawning escapement from catchments to help assess performance of eel management plans

## 6. EFF Bid and Europe wide Bid

- Barry Bendall reported that the Marine Management Organisation are still considering the bid to EFF. There have been a series of queries to answer.
- A lot of time has passed and we have lost other match funding so we are very disappointed by the process and the outcome so far
- A sticking point may be that the EFF bid is usually for marine fisheries, not freshwater

## 7. Sustainable Eel Standard

- New Assessments.
  - David reported that 4 new assessments have been certified in recent in recent weeks, bringing the total now to 11
  - The full list has been circulated and will be published on the website
  - Presentations were made to Richard Cook for Severn & Wye Smokery and to Peter Wood for Les Landes Glass Eel fishery
- Dupan Foundation
  - Jo Gascoigne is developing a questionnaire to assess the smokeries in the Netherlands affiliated to Dupan
  - Dupan will fund those assessments
- Logo & Licensing
  - Chris Leftwich has been working with their trade association to:
  - Trademark and licence the SEG logo and eco-label across Europe. This offers us the protection of sole use
  - Has also been working on a licensing agreement to use with those who wish to use the logo
  - Businesses able to show traceability of the sustainable product can be licensed to trade in it and use the logo
- Improvements & revisions to the Standard
  - David, Chairman of the Eel Standard sub-group described the process for the future review and improvement of the Standard, including bringing new people in, ie. MCS, Traffic, WWF France. Identify stakeholders in each Country to consult with. Improving the Standard is included in the EFF Bid so has not progressed yet
  - ISO accreditation preferred – depending on cost and timing
  - Use of word Sustainable to be reviewed too. Don't wish to dilute the strength

Claire

- of the standard, but recognise also the Dutch court case implications. Must ensure can be clear to the public. Not to have an interim / lower Standard
- Consider how to assess a sub-set of fishermen in a large fishery – eg. the Loire David

- Re-assessment process and rules David
  - Panel to consider how to deal with re-assessments and with any non-compliance

- Website & e-mail address Claire
  - Looking to change so that people like Andrew can use SEG e-mail address Claire
  - And to change website address to [www.sustainableeelgroup.org](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org) instead of .com (.com seen as commercial in Europe)

## 8. Annual General Meeting

- Board membership. David
  - Agreed – subject to Alex being approved by the Board of Dupan. David to write to the Board of Dupan to officially ask
- Financial position.
  - Our Treasurer is away, so the position provided is an outline position rather than definitive. Full set of accounts at the next meeting.
- Funding 2012.
  - Can't formulate a full plan until outcome of EFF bid known
  - Also need to canvass conservationists and other private companies for donations
  - The Venice conference is an opportunity to draw in membership

## 9. Meeting Plan for 2012

- The outline plan was agreed. Can be published on the website Claire

## 10. Any other business

- Venice conference. Andrew is considering spending SEG money to help get poorer members of Europe able to attend. Approx 10 people @ approx £500 each – from Morocco, Greece, Portugal, Tunisia, Spain etc. Board members requested that those people seek their relevant grants and/or match-funding first. SEG would consider subsidising / match funding, following requests to the Secretary. to help subsidise it. This approach was preferable as rather than a blanket offer.
- Matt Gollock thanked Andrew for his ongoing leadership and dedication to SEG, which was warmly supported by others
- We thanked ZSL and Matt for their hospitality today
- Peter Wood suggested that a quota for European farms needed. This could help avoid the problem is that Spain can take a lot of the market, early, at a high price and low quality, and soak up the quota. Something to influence Brussels on, and the French Committee de Peche. Andrew
- Claire asked if we had engaged with MCS. We met them last summer and are due to meet again. They take their lead from IUCN on which fish to be regarded as OK to eat on their website

## **Attendance**

### Attending

Andrew Kerr  
David Bunt  
Chris Leftwich  
Matt Gollock  
Brian Knights  
Julian Jones  
Peter Wood  
Andrew Morgan  
Miran Aprahamian  
Andy Don  
Barry Bendall  
Corine Rozendaal  
Claire Tibbott  
Richard Fordham  
Arne Koops  
John van Dooren  
Mogens Mathieson  
Alex Koelewijn  
Jac Tijssen  
Richard Cook  
Dai Francis

### Apologies

Paul Knight  
Janina Gray  
Maldwin Drummond  
Alan Walker  
Robert Rosell  
Vin Fleming  
Peter Neusinger  
Roger Castle  
Trevor Salmon  
Ayesha Taylor  
Richard Dearnley  
Alistair Maltby  
Frank Bradley  
Vicky Crook  
Velo Metrovitch  
Colin Bean  
Tony Bostock  
Jo Gascoigne  
Catherine Remy  
Nicholas Michelet