



Sustainable *Eel* Group

Newsletter December 2013



Chairman's Introduction

Hello and welcome to the 2013 SEG newsletter. In the last 12 months we have seen significant progress in all corners of Europe, and every month has brought interesting and exciting developments for the eel.

As we go to press, we're hearing more encouraging news of very high numbers of glass eels arrivals in

Atlantic France, and our members in Germany are reporting some of the highest volumes of silver eel escapements in years.

Last month, ICES released a very clear and up to date report which detailed the recent rising trends in glass eel recruitment, while also recognizing the difficulties of accurately measuring eel numbers and linking human endeavours with the recovery of the species.

Authorities in the European Union and national governments are taking the eel situation very seriously, and have embraced the sustainable agenda. The PECH Committee's in depth report on eel to the European Parliament in September put sustainability at its heart, and included many measures that were directly suggested by SEG. We were delighted that the report was adopted in full by the Parliament. Subsequently we have also seen tough action from several national authorities against those who are poaching or operating illegally with eels in the UK, Holland and France, including the imposition of heavy fines by courts.

That said, the last year has also left us in no doubt that high profile politicians and interest groups will continue to advocate one sided extreme measures for the eel. We believe that this is attempting to divide the wide coalition of groups with "eel blood" that have come together under SEG to help the eel, and this will be detrimental to its recovery.

Working together, we have built real momentum in 2013. Most visibly, we have seen perhaps the largest collective human effort to date to assist *Anguilla Anguilla*. In Holland, Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Italy and the UK hundreds of people with eel blood have given up their time and resources to restock or relocate many tens of millions of eels over



Inside this issue

World News.....	2
Stocked Eels go back to sea	3
Report: Eel Survival.....	5
Eels in the media	6
Euro Parliament eel debate.....	8
Italy's Eel Museum	11
Raising the Standard	13
2013 in review	15
Diary dates for 2014	16

Staying in touch

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Chairman's Introduction continued

waterway barriers to give them a better chance to grow, to escape and migrate. It should also be recognised that much of this is voluntary. Next year we hope to start four new partnership projects in France, Italy, Holland and the UK to work on improving entire river systems – removing barriers and providing better habitats for the eel.

It is also clear that the Sustainable Eel Standard is gaining a stronger profile. We are very pleased that large collectors in France have applied for assessment. We recognise the progress they are making and wish them all the best.

There is no doubt that the Standard is coming under even closer scrutiny as we start new partnerships with other conservation organizations, as our members approach new commercial ventures, and as Governments and environmental groups continue to examine our activities and initiatives. The Standard has been designed to demonstrate a clear devotion to transparent and sustainable practices that go well beyond the measures required by national eel plans, and its tough criteria can only be met by the very best practices.

Next year promises to be another interesting and active period for SEG, and we hope to take more significant further strides forward. None of our achievements would be possible without the ongoing financial and physical support of our members, for which we are very grateful.

Andrew Kerr
Chairman, SEG

NEWS: Highest glass eel arrival in SW Europe for 20 years!

SEG members and fisheries officials are reporting large volumes of glass eels arriving in Atlantic France and Spain.

Fishermen on the first river basin to open its quota, the Adour, filled the consumption quota of fish in 11 days at the start of November. Last year it took many months to reach this point.

Similarly, when the consumption quota on the Gironde opened a fortnight later, it was filled in just 8 days. Last year it took 6 weeks – the year before took 12 weeks. As we go to press, fishing on the Loire has opened and we're hearing of significantly increased recruitment there too.

In Spain, SEG members are sending reports of glass eels that are much bigger than last year, at around 0.4g each, and volumes twice as large as last year.

For updates, follow SEG on Twitter @EelGroup.

Eels returning to rivers in Spain

Eels have returned to the estuary of the river Avilés in Northern Spain – having not been seen in the river for at least 10 years, according to reports this month.

This follows news that eels have returned to the Segura River in South East Spain, also for the first time in over 10 years.



New study shows stocked eels returning towards Sargasso Sea

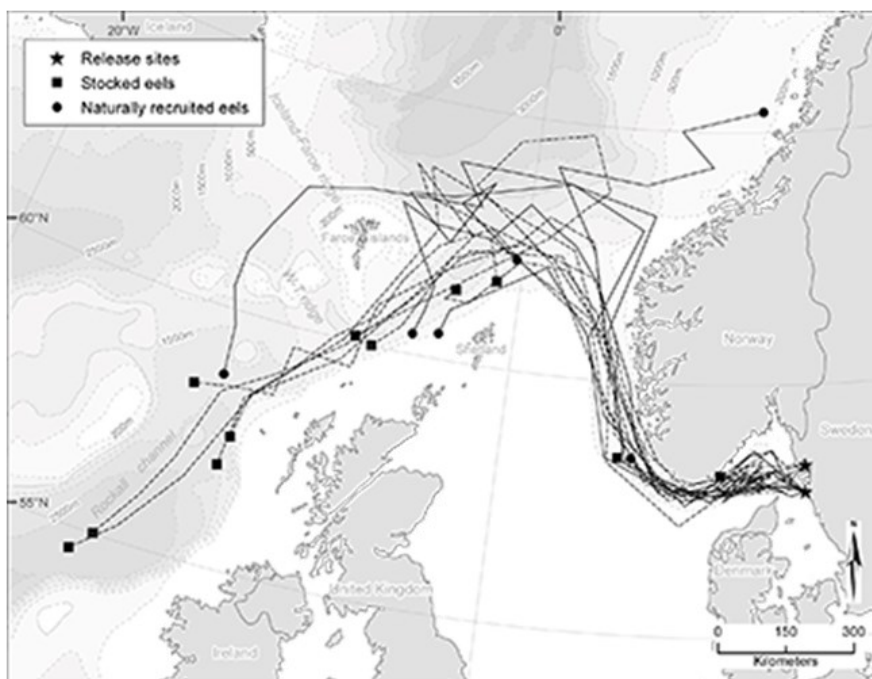
A groundbreaking new study into the migration behaviour of naturally recruited and stocked eels has been published by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The report, published in the journal *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, summarises:

“An objection to the stocking of translocated eels as a management measure for the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla* L.) is that these eels may lack the ability to find their way back to the spawning area in the Sargasso Sea because the translocation will confuse their imprinted navigation.

There were no statistically significant differences in estuarine or oceanic behaviour ... between stocked and naturally recruited eels.

We undertook a series of tagging experiments using satellite tags, data storage tags and acoustic tags to test the hypothesis that eels translocated 1200km from the UK to Sweden differed in their ability to migrate compared to naturally recruited eels. Eels to be tagged were caught in two locations: one with a record of eel stocking for more than 20 years and with a series of barriers to upstream migration, and another in a river with only natural immigration and without barriers to upstream migration. ➡



Eel news from around the world

Outside the EU, eels are also making the news in other parts of the world.

Reports from North Africa indicate that glass eel arrivals have boomed this year, as in south west Europe, and many fishermen have rushed to take advantage of increased supply.

While it is believed that some of these fish are being sent to Asia, it has also been reported that there has been a threefold increase in glass eel recruitment for *Anguilla japonica*, and this has dramatically reduced Asian demand (and prices) for eel from other parts of the world.

In the USA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is considering a conservation group's petition to declare the American eel an endangered species, with an answer promised in 2015. The issue has generated a lot of news coverage, and fisheries managers are debating whether to limit the national eel catch, which rebounded recently after a long decline.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which oversees near-shore fishing, has delayed a decision on catch limits until May 2014 but the state of Maine is already initiating measures to reduce its commercial harvest of glass eels by 25-40% next year.

Separately, a new 'adventure' TV series is being launched which follows three teams of elvermen during the fishing season. Called 'Cold River Cash', it will be broadcast on Animal Planet from January 2, and the publicity material says the series "follows Maine's fiercest fishermen in their mad rush to cash in on surprisingly valuable elver eels".

Increase in Silver Eel escapement in Southern England

Roger Castle reports that in 2012 silver eel escapement from the River Avon in Hampshire was the heaviest reported for 20 years.

Recruitment of elvers moving upstream on the River Stour in Dorset in 2012 were also the highest witnessed in living memory.



Densities of yellow eel on the Hampshire Avon in 2013 were 65% of pristine - they were down to less than 25% in 2009!

Observations from SEG members in 2013 also provide anecdotal evidence of the highest densities of elver movements ever seen on the River Tamar, and there is additional anecdotal evidence of rising catches of yellow eels in Poole Harbour after the fishery had all but collapsed in the last 100 years.

➡ In the first year, the natural and stocked eels were released in a fjord where the initial escapement behaviour could be monitored by acoustic tagging, in addition to using archival and satellite tags to track the subsequent marine migration.

In the second year, the eels were released on the open coast and only their marine migration was investigated. Eels were tracked more than 2000km along a route that, after leaving the Skagerrak, followed the Norwegian Trench to the Norwegian Sea, turned south and west along the Faroe-Shetland channel before emerging into the Atlantic Ocean and then continued west.



There were no statistically significant differences in estuarine or oceanic behaviour regarding route, swimming speed and preferred swimming depth between stocked and naturally recruited eels.

These results provide the first empirical evidence of a Nordic migration route, and do not support the hypothesis that a sequential imprinting of the route during the immigration is necessary for adequate orientation or behaviour during the adult spawning migration."

Håkan Westerberg*, Niklas Sjöberg, Ingvar Lagenfelt, Kim Aarestrup, David Righton email: Hakan.westerberg@slu.se



Research news just in:

Jean-François Holley of Cépralmar reports: "The University of Perpignan has just marked 8 silver eels (6 from the lagoon of Leucate and 2 from the lagoon of Gruissan). The "satellite" mark should remain in place for 6 months. Hopefully, it will confirm whether or not eels cross the Gibraltar strait."

Simon & Deorner report: Survival and growth of European eels stocked as glass- and farm-sourced eels in five lakes in the first years after stocking

A major study into the early years growth of European Eels has been published by Janek Simon of the Institute of Inland Fisheries, Potsdam, Germany and Hendrik Deorner, European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Maritime Affairs Unit in Italy.

Their report summary says: "European eels *Anguilla anguilla* stocked as wild-sourced glass eels showed a better overall performance of growth and survival compared with farm-sourced eels after stocking in five isolated lakes within a seven-year study period.



Eels stocked as farm eels lost their initial size advantage over eels stocked as glass eels within three - five years after stocking. Population sizes estimated for consecutive stocking batches indicated that 8–17% of eels stocked as farm eels survived 3–6 years after stocking compared with five – 45% of eels stocked as glass eels.

This study coupled with results of previous studies suggests that stocking of farm eels may have no advantage in growth and survival compared with stocking of glass eels if stocking occurs at an optimal time in spring. In addition, the use of relatively expensive farm eels may provide no general advantage over stocking of glass eels.

However, if glass eels are only available for stocking purposes very early in the year, lower survival rates than obtained in the present study can be assumed and stocking with relatively more expensive farm eels could possibly be a better option."

[Click for more report details.](#)

Update from the University of Bologna Aquaculture Team

Michaela Mandelli reports: "Since the London conference in July, life in Cesenatico has got busier. We've been contacted both by people that attended the conference and by others that heard about the presentation. Meanwhile we were able to conduct weaning tests with a late batch of larvae and we've had confirmation that we are already ahead of the game.

Thanks to the support of SEG, and Andrew Kerr's visit to Italy, the laboratory is now trying to get funding through a European project that would touch every single aspect of the concept of sustainability for the European eel. The proposal should now be considered by three different North Adriatic District regions.

Last week we went back to our main activity in the lab, with the students and most of all with our new wild eels provided from different locations. We also intend to test farmed eel populations, and thanks to the new contacts we got from SEG we might have them soon. Following lessons with Dr Mordenti the students have experienced interaction with the animals for the first time and learned about the first procedures we need to carry out as they arrive at our premises (see picture). So, it's time to start the journey to the Sargassi again..."



Eastern Europe Update

SEG's mission to promote eel sustainability in Europe is reaching a wider audience, and those with eel blood in Eastern Europe have approached us to learn more.

A traditional eel farm in Republic of Belarus has contacted SEG and is keen to introduce the strict codes of our Standard to the Republic of Belarus and surrounding countries. The farm has been operating since 1956 and is based around 48 lakes.

Already involved in providing permanent restocking of young eels to the Neman River and Zapadnaya Dvina River, the owners are also combating poaching and promoting legislative initiatives to improve their national legal framework in relation to the preservation and fishing of eel.

The farm has also been made a branch of the Belarusian Institute of Fishery in studying and monitoring the population of European eel in Republic of Belarus; has created a group that consists of an engineer-ichthyologist and an eel specialist studying growth, nutrition, disease and migration; and they are studying the peculiarities of eel care jointly with Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian specialists on Baltic fish farms.

A Czech public radio station recently contacted SEG for information and a long interview with Chairman Andrew Kerr, regarding our efforts to aid the recovery of the eel.

Eels in the media

Public awareness of the challenges faced by the eel, and our initiatives to aid its recovery, is increasing. Communication with the media, politicians and the public is a key part of SEG's strategy, and 2013 has seen some high profile appearances for the eel.

SEG, alongside partners from the River's Trusts, UK Glass Eels, the University of Southampton and the Severn and Wye Smokery has appeared on UK nature documentaries, news programmes and radio breakfast shows.

In Holland, every news outlet covered the latest 'Eels over the Dyke' campaign by DUPAN.

November's BioMar magazine features an in-depth article on SEG titled "Joining forces for recovery". The article features many interviews with SEG members, and was published in Danish, German, Swedish and Finnish editions of the BioMar Magazine in December, as well as French, Spanish and Italian editions in November. A separate but similar article had also appeared this month in the Landsman magazine in the UK.

We are now very active on Twitter and Facebook, so please follow us for all the latest news and send us your updates so we can include everything that is happening.

Twitter: @EelGroup

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sustainableeelgroup



Eel release into the River Lymn



BBC interview with SEG and the Severn Rivers Trust



Dutch media attend DUPAN's latest Eels over the Dyke campaign

Hydrolox Offers Screening Solution for Eels Regulations

The Eels Regulations requires companies in the UK who utilize water extraction to meet a threshold of 40% eel “escapement” by 2015. To achieve this, companies are required to initiate a variety of measures including those to reduce eel entrainment and impingement harm when encountering intake and outfall screens.

Depending upon abstraction rates, the type of screening technology presently utilized, and the nature of the eel populations present in the water source, companies may be required to update their water screen technology to comply with the Eels Regulations.

Hydrolox™ traveling water screens is one option companies can consider for compliance. The Environment Agency has recently identified Hydrolox traveling water screens as a potential screening option for those facilities managing glass eel, elver, and adult yellow/silver eel populations.

Hydrolox screens are made of durable, impact-and abrasion-resistant polymer materials that do not rust or corrode, and are less likely to bio foul. The screen’s sealed edges, non-adhering smooth mesh surface and self-cleaning capabilities reduce fish injury, impingement and mortality rates.

The screens lightweight material material also makes for easier installation and repairs. In many cases, screens can be retrofitted to an existing water screening system.

Currently 6 Water & Power companies are investing in Hydrolox Technology in UK to meet EEL and Fish screening requirements.

For more information about Hydrolox traveling water screens, visit www.hydrolox.com or contact Mr. Karl Bousfield at karl.bousfield@intralox.com.



Hydrolox traveling water screens operating at Affinity Water Limited's Chertsey water treatment location.

Eel Pass Update: UK

Over 500 eel passes have been installed by the Environment Agency and Rivers Trusts.

High-profile examples include a hydraulic ram eel pass installed by the Environment Agency in Gloucestershire, in a channel of around 20m in length which ascends 9m vertically; and a new pass at Dinham Weir under Ludlow Castle on the River Teme.



Summary of September's European Parliament eel debate

SEG attended the vote on eel regulation at the European Parliament in September and spent time discussing the issues with MEPs before and during the debate.

As a consequence, MEPs asked the Commission to consider the following when they review the existing regulations:

- 1) the importance of unblocking migratory pathways, including screening of hydropower stations and pumps
- 2) that restocking remains a vital conservation measure until migratory pathways are unblocked providing it is carried out in optimal ways

As you may have seen, the Parliament adopted the report from Ms Lovin and the PECH Committee - with 427 votes in favour, 249 against and 25 abstentions. EPP (the biggest group in the Parliament with 1/3 of the votes) and the French socialists were against it for different reasons.

We understand that while these parties are not against the sustainable agenda, the EPP did not want to change the regulation beyond the administrative needs of the Lisbonisation procedural changes (which was the objective of the exercise).



The SEG message was accepted, and our points will be considered when the existing regulations are reviewed by the Commission in the next few weeks. The Commissioner Maria Damanaki has said that she has heard and will listen.

While we are pleased that the debate is no longer solely about a ban on all eel fishing (and the press statement from the Parliament after the vote outlined a number of environmental factors that are affecting eels), subsequent press interviews show that some interest groups and politicians still think that an overall ban is their favoured option.

The Commission is planning to present the implementation report in late 2013 or early 2014, but after that timing is uncertain. A revision of the regulations could be published in February/March 2014, or at the end of the year. This is because the Parliament will move into election mode in April next year, so there will be no regulatory activity during the summer. We will not know who the relevant Commissioner or the members of the PECH Committee will be until after the election, so this also presents an unknown factor.

[Read more about the debate here](#)

www.sustainableeelgroup.com

Swedish smoked eels sporting SEG logo

Richard Fordham writes: “Here is a selection of smoked eel products which are being sold primarily in Sweden. The smoked eel products display the SEG logo together with a batch number and are certified in accordance with the Sustainable Eel Standard.

The products have full traceability from glass eel capture to consumption. Their presence, in shops and restaurants, has created many opportunities to discuss eels and sustainability.”



News from Germany

Arne Koops writes: “Our first ‘trap & trail’ consignment was transported from the middle of the river Weser down to Bremerhaven (both in Lower Saxony). Local fishermen had collected approximately 200kgs of fish.

The 40 % escapement quota for Germany equates to 2,181 tons and the scientists say we missed this by only 136 tons in 2012, so ‘trap and trail’ could really help.

In the Elbe estuary the locals caught pretty good amounts of silver eel this year. Normally 2 or 3 vessels operate there in the autumn, looking for big eels. They catch for consumption (approx 10 tons) but judging by the amounts they caught, we believe there must be many more fish.

From a so-called ‘catch and release’ program in the south (part of the Rhine system) they brought approx 4.5 tons downstream in 2012. This program has been operating since the middle of the 1990s with annual catches up to 7.5 tons.”

UK Government announces tighter controls following horsemeat scandal

Following the ‘horsemeat’ scandal earlier this year, the UK Government has published its initial plans to introduce stronger punishments for food producers caught acting dishonestly or illegally and to increase traceability measures.

Working for UK Government Ministers, Professor Chris Elliott of Queen’s University Belfast, has suggested new measures to tackle food fraud, including:

- industry, government and enforcement agencies always giving food safety and crime prevention absolute priority over other objectives
- zero tolerance for food fraud, so the response to major dishonesties is punitive
- shared investment between government and industry in intelligence gathering and sharing
- industry and regulators to give weight to audit

and assurance regimes, and to minimise duplication where possible

- clear leadership and coordination of investigations and prosecutions
- recognition of the public interest in active enforcement and significant penalties for significant food crimes



Sweden's waterway obstructions

Sweden's department for agricultural science has estimated that around 300,000 eels are dying every year after being struck by hydropower turbines or by getting stuck in grid intakes at power plants.



Boycott the real eel slaughter

A letter published in Swedish newspaper Sydsvenskan on Thursday November 14, 2013:

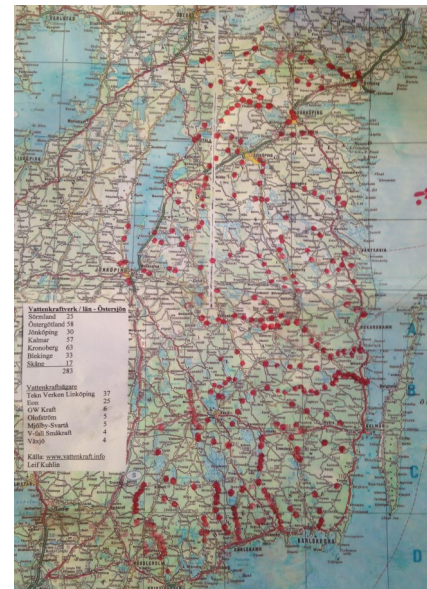
"Today I thought that there was nobody who did not know that hydropower was the greatest threat to the eel in Sweden. Even the hydropower industry knows that they prevent nearly all glass eels and yellow eels from migrating to their habitats (lakes) and then they kill or damage 70% of the emigrating silver eels. But, there are still many who advocate boycotting smoked eels for Christmas. They do not seem to know that eels are slaughtered producing electricity. They think eels will be saved by simply not eating smoked eels at Christmas. Councils, companies, private individuals and all who use electricity slaughter eels, even small children watching a cartoon.

Would it not be better to encourage boycotting of the real eel slaughter? People should instead demand a red listing of electricity which is not eel certified. Why should restaurants have the sole responsibility for the survival of the eel? They are unable to save the eel – they must use electricity. There is no eel-safe electricity in Sweden today due indirectly to The Nature Conservancy of Sweden and the World Wildlife Fund. They have directly given the Hydropower industry a green light and instead chase 240 eel fishermen who are only allowed to fish 90 days a year.

Glass eel fishing in Sweden is prohibited. Over the last five years the eel fishery has been dramatically reduced and this has meant that the goals of the eel management plan have been achieved. While the hydropower industry only needs to sign a voluntary agreement, which must be by 2015. In contrast, there are approximately 2000 hydropower plants where hardly anything has changed. So, they are able to continue slaughtering eels – 365 days a year. For no benefit.

Restaurant owners, you will not save the eel by not serving it. Support your heritage and industry."

Maria Blombärg
Chairperson of the Society for the Eel Coast's eel fishermen, an intangible world heritage site



Map of Sweden: the red dots are water turbines

Celebrating the Eel's history in Comacchio, Italy

For anyone interested in eel history a visit to the Comacchio museum is a must.

The town of Comacchio is located just in the middle of the river Po Delta, the main water basin in Italy, and it is famous for the abundant fisheries since the early middle ages. Comacchio dominated an area of more than 73,000 hectares of water (both brackish and fresh water), which has been gradually reduced to just 13,000 hectare. Fisheries were so rich that the famous castle of the Este family, in Ferrara, built during the 14th and 15th centuries was paid for thanks to the sales of the eels and fish from the lagoons all around Comacchio.



Today it is possible to visit the eel museum in Comacchio which is the old factory where eels were collected, cooked and marinated. The entire town made its living from the eel industry. There is still a huge hall to visit where the eels were cooked, which is called the "Sala dei Marinati" and a movie from the 1930s explains and shows all the processes of the marinated eels.

Production was up to hundreds of tons every year, while today it is just reduced to a few tons of eels captured. The lagoons were a very productive ecosystem and the

eel numbers were very high until the recruitment from glass eels collapsed and the water quality changed greatly in the lagoons (from brackish to high salinity water).

All the lagoons around Comacchio are now protected by the national park - Parco Nazionale del Delta del Po - which is in charge to preserve the biggest Italian wetland.

For further information about the Eel museum, please visit www.parcodeltapo.it and look for Manifattura dei Marinati.

Beyond the museum, Comacchio is very pleasant to visit, with canals and old restaurants where you can enjoy marinated eels and fish from the lagoons. Ferrara is just 40 km away and is also worth a visit.

For further information or help with your visit, please contact Armando Piccinini, SEG Italy, armandopiccinini68@yahoo.it

Armando Piccinini, SEG ITALY – Parma University



Trap and Transport: Report from the Environment Agency

Andy Don writes: "We have led on the concept, development and installation of a trap and transport scheme for eels in partnership with Bristol Water. This work will help improve local eel populations, contribute to European Eel Management Plan targets, support compliance with the Eel Regulations and provide an excellent educational and visual interpretation facility.



Together with Bristol Water, we identified a bottleneck to eel recruitment. Like many other water supply reservoirs, Blagdon Reservoir near Bristol has become partially disconnected from its river, the Congresbury Yeo. Development of the water supply infrastructure has blocked the migration pathway for eels into the reservoir. An eel pass alone would need to be several hundred metres long to make the connection and would be prohibitively expensive. Trapping and transporting the newly migrating eels solves this problem.

Reservoirs are excellent habitat for eels. Blagdon used to have a thriving eel fishery, catching adult eels as they headed out to sea. The trapping has stopped, but the reservoir can still provide an excellent home for eels. The new Trap and Transport system has been built next to the old trapping channel. It uses short sections of eel pass leading to a holding tank. To provide a sustainable solution, the required pump is powered by a solar array which charges batteries by day. Eels are nocturnal migrants and the pump automatically comes on at dusk and switches off at dawn.

Bristol Water Fisheries staff will monitor the trap, harvesting the captured elvers that have arrived overnight and moving them up into the reservoir to grow for up to 15 years before migrating back to the sea as adults.

This site also has educational capacity. The holding tank has been uniquely designed to allow easy capture of eels and a safe 'platform' arrangement to allow children to peer into the tank at the trapped elvers. Children will learn about the work that we and our partners are carrying out to improve eel stocks and the use of renewable energy sources for these kinds of applications. There will be an interpretation board at the site and regular sessions with schools and colleges will be held throughout the spring and summer each year.

Hundreds of eels had used the passes and been transported up into the reservoir in July and August. In September an opening ceremony was held with the media in attendance. People involved in the project and pupils from a local school were invited. They were able to learn about the technical operation of the system, and the renewable energy sources being used in its operation.



They learned about the life cycle of the eel and the challenges this species faces as well as gaining an understanding of the implications of the Eel Regulations that have been enacted to help protect the eel.

Finally they released some elvers into their new reservoir home.

For further information about this project or how we and others are fulfilling obligations under the Eel Regulations please contact Andy Don, National Fisheries Services.

andy.don@environment-agency.gov.uk

Progress with the Sustainable Eel Standard

About the Standard

The Sustainable Eel Standard describes a series of high quality tests that eel operators must demonstrate if they wish to trade in sustainably sourced eel. There are components relating to fisheries, buyers, farms, traceability, and commitment to sustainability. The Standard is in its fifth version and was last significantly updated in June 2013.

The Standard has been in operation for two and a half years. It has been successful in attracting operators to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, and to indicate to our antagonists that the sector can be sustainable. The Standard is now starting to be recognised by ethical retailers and consumers who want to buy sustainably sourced fish.

It is vitally important for the Standard to have credibility, if it is to give the consumer confidence that the eel being bought is what is claimed on the packet.

Certificate v Eco-label

There are two different and important aspects of the Standard – the Certificate and the Eco-label.

The Certificate is awarded to a business where it has been independently assessed to pass the Sustainable Eel Standard. This indicates that it has high management standards and therefore the **ability** to handle or trade in sustainably sourced eel.

The Eco-label is awarded on licence where a business has passed the Standard, has passed the component for traceability and can verify that they are **trading in eel from a certified sustainable source**.

Holding the Standard alone does not indicate that a supplier has certified sustainably sourced eel, this is verified by the presence of the eco-label (pictured, right) on the packaging, with associated auditable batch-numbering.

Registered businesses

SEG maintains a register of businesses that hold the Standard or are licensed to use the eco-label.

Currently licensed to use the eco-label are as follows:

- 1 yellow eel fishery
- 4 eel farms
- 1 wholesaler

A further 50 organisations have been assessed against the Standard, representing about two-thirds of the market in Europe.

When these deal in sustainable eel, traceable from fishery to retailer, it will give consumers and supermarkets the confidence to make the sustainable choice, as many do now when they seek the MSC label for many fish products. Earlier this year SEG published a joint Q&A with MSC to highlight the common approaches and complementary practices of each scheme. The full Q&A text can be found [here](#).

The high standards set by the Sustainable Eel Standard are vital to provide that confidence and supermarkets will test the supply chain very carefully before they risk their reputation on it.

Finally, we are looking for new members to join our independent assessment panel. If you are interested please contact me.

David Bunt
Chair, Sustainable Eel Standard Panel



Sustainably sourced eel guaranteed

Eel Research in the Bristol Channel: update

Miran Aprahamian writes: "A literature review on glass eel behaviour is currently being undertaken by APEM, Europe's leading independent environmental consultancy specialising in freshwater and marine ecology and aerial surveys.

Two additional surveys have also been carried out by CEFAS in collaboration with EDF to look at the spatial and temporal behaviour of glass eels in the Bristol Channel.

The study was a pilot investigation to assess the feasibility of undertaking a larger scale monitoring programme to quantify the recruitment of glass eel into the Bristol Channel / Severn system - if funds become available. The results will hopefully be available in 2014."

The Bristol Channel is the first port of call for most glass eels arriving in the United Kingdom



The MedWet Secretariat is moving to the Camargue in France

Having been hosted in Athens, Greece since 2001, the MedWet Secretariat is moving to Tour du Valat in the Camargue in France.

For the last 12 years the Centre has been supported financially by a generous contribution given by the Greek government. The financial crisis affected this and so in February 2013 all the members of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) were invited to provide support to the MedWet Secretariat.

In June 2013, the Ramsar Secretariat received an offer from France to host the MedWet secretariat for the next triennium. After careful analysis the MedWet Steering Group, transmitted its conclusion to the MedWet/Com which, in November 2013, officially accepted the offer.

The start of the New Year will find the MedWet Secretariat in the Camargue, France's first Ramsar Site. This will provide MedWet with a unique opportunity to reinforce cooperation with the neighboring Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) and the Tour du Valat

research centre for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands. This is hoped to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise, in particular for the further development of the MWO, and enable each party to engage in shared activities and achieve more for Mediterranean wetlands.

A spokesperson at the MedWet Centre said "We gratefully acknowledge the generous contribution that Greece has provided for many years to the MedWet and we hope that the move to France will provide the momentum needed to achieve MedWet's mission and to efficiently and productively work towards the wise use of Mediterranean wetlands."

SEG is working with Tour du Valat to develop and implement an eel conservation program for the south of France and other Mediterranean lagoons built around the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

These are ideal habitats for the fast growing of eels in the wild. Not only can they reach maturity in a few years, they also have the benefit of salt water to reduce the numbers of parasites.

HISTORY QUIZ!

As far as we know, the oldest picture of an eel dates back to 200BC in Pompei (see below). Do you know of one that is older?



Next year we're going to start an eel archive on the SEG website and we are looking for images, facts and trivia about eels through history.

If you have any, please send them to Simon at segpressoffice@gmail.com

2013 in review

- January: SEG gave a presentation to the Swedish Eel Conference at Ahus south of Stockholm
- February: SEG engages with members of the PECH committee in Brussels
- March: SEG addressed the French National Committee De Pech to support the sustainable eel agenda
- April: SEG addressed an audience in Valencia at the Aquarium and presented the Sustainable Eel Standard to 19 eel smokers in Holland
- May: SEG joined DUPAN for a major glass eel release in inland waters in Holland
- June: Elvermen on the River Severn and Parrett in the UK donated a million fish for immediate restocking

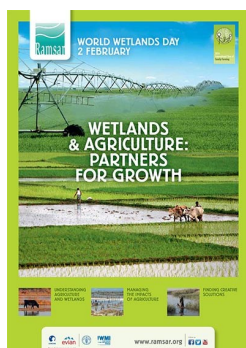


- July: The IFM SEG Eel conference in London attracted 190 people from 20 countries – the largest attendance to date.
- SEG appeared alongside Jonathan Porritt and Pavan Sukhdev on the BBC Radio 4's Shared Planet programme
- August: SEG visited Roger Castle's programme in Bournemouth, operating in partnership with Southampton University
- September: European Parliament debated eel management issues
- October: SEG's UK restocking initiatives drew widespread media coverage
- November: SEG met partner organisations in Holland, Adriatic Italy and Mediterranean France to discuss joint conservation programmes for 2014 and beyond
- December: SEG met Severn Rivers Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to start a major new conservation programme on the River Severn

Key dates for 2014

2 February - World Wetlands Day.

2014 is the UN International Year of Family Farming and the Ramsar Convention has chosen Wetlands & Agriculture as the campaign theme for 2014. The slogan is "Wetlands and Agriculture: Partners for Growth", placing a focus on the need for the wetland and agricultural sectors (and the water sector too of course) to work together for the best shared outcomes. Wetlands have often been seen as a barrier to agriculture, and they continue to be drained and reclaimed to make farming land available. But the essential role of wetlands in support of agriculture is becoming clearer and clearer, and there are successful agricultural practices which support healthy wetlands.



7/8 May – River Restoration Centre 14th Annual Network Conference

'River Restoration: Delivering Multiple Benefits' at Sheffield Hallam University, England.

22 – 25 May – Euro Parliament Elections

24 May - World Fish Migration Day, calling attention to restore the connections worldwide between rivers and the sea to create safe migration routes for fish. World Fish Migration Day has been developed to improve the public's understanding of migratory fish and their needs. Celebrations and field events start in New Zealand, and follow the sun around the world and end as the sun sets on the west coast of North America. They already have more than 35 locations worldwide that can be visited, and are still looking for other organisations that want to join in. More news on SEG's involvement next year. www.wanningenwaterconsult.nl/en/products/world-fish-migration-day-2014

7-11 July – The Fisheries Society of the British Isles Annual International

Symposium at the University of Hull, UK, titled 'Integrated Perspectives on Fish Stock Enhancement'

17-21 August - International Eel Symposium 2014: 'Are eels climbing back up the slippery slope?'

Hosted during the annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) in Quebec City, Canada, the Symposium will be jointly presented by the AFS and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), with an international committee of European and North American representatives.

In 2003, AFS held an eel symposium at its annual meeting, also in Quebec City, which proved a pivotal moment in eel science and conservation. That session culminated in the "Quebec Declaration of Concern," which highlighted the international nature of the eel conservation problem.

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