



*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations  
for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful  
restoration well in progress by 2015*

## **ESA and CITES Petitions**





# CITES

- In April USFWS announced that American eel was being considered for listing on CITES Appendix II
  - Recommended by Species Survival Network and WWF due to concern for “look alike cases” with European eels and potential for increased demand for the American eel as a replacement species in international trade for the European eel
- ASMFC provided comments
- Decision expected early November





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# ESA

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- USFWS staff and funds have not yet been allocated for American eel status review





# ESA

- A species must be listed if it is threatened or endangered due to any of the following five factors:
  1. Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
  2. Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
  3. Disease or predation;
  4. Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence
  5. Inadequacy of existing management





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# Technical Committee Report

**American Eel Board  
August 2012**





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# TC Task

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- In May 2012 the Board tasked the American Eel Technical and Stock Assessment Subcommittees to develop management options to:
  - **Reduce mortality** in response to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment for American eel, which concluded the American eel stock is depleted





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# Management Options

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## 1. Commercial Fisheries

- Glass Eels
- Yellow Eels
- Silver Eels

## 2. Recreational Fisheries

## 3. Monitoring

## 4. Habitat

## 5. Law Enforcement





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# Glass Eel Fisheries

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- 2012 assessment did not identify a relationship between glass eel recruitment and adult data
- However, the TC recommends precautionary management of fisheries targeting this early life stage given the depleted status of the stock, including the continuation regulations which prohibit glass eel fisheries from developing.
- Considerable concern over increased effort and illegal activity in the past two years in response to an exponential increase in glass eel prices.







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# Glass Eel Fisheries

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- Management measures to decrease glass eel fishing effort and mortality below current levels:
  - **Effort Reductions**
  - **Coastwide Closure**
- Management measures to prevent future increases in effort and expansion of new markets:
  - **Coastwide quota**
  - **Prevent expansion of fishery on young pigmented eels**
  - **Increase glass eel dealer restrictions/requirements**
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# Yellow Eel Fisheries

- New management measures that could decrease yellow eel fishing effort and mortality below current levels:
  - **Increase Minimum Size (8 to 12 inches)**
  - **Establish Maximum Size**
- New management measures that would prevent future increases in effort:
  - **Effort reductions**
  - **Coastwide quota**





State	# Permits or Licenses Issued
ME	~ 30 coastal pot and ~10 inland pot
NH	33 permits issued (7 active)
MA	121 permits
RI	At least 18 licensed fishermen
CT	4 permits
NY	21 licenses
PA	No commercial fishery
NJ	148 permits
DE	65 permits issued (15 active)
MD	239 Commercial Finfish Harvester Licenses and 2088 Unlimited Tidal Fish Licenses, 82 reported harvest of eel
DC	No commercial fishery
PRFC	49 licenses(20 active)
VA	427 permits (256 permits <100 pots; 136 permits between 100-300 pots; 35 permits 300+ pots)
NC	26 licenses
SC	0 permits
GA	0 permits
FL	29 permits





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# Silver Eel Fisheries

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- New management measures that could decrease silver eel fishing effort and mortality below current levels
  - **Maximum size limits**
  - **Moratorium on silver eel permits/fisheries**
  - **Seasonal Closures**
  - **Gear restrictions**





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# Recreational Fisheries

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- **Reduce Bag Limit**

- Currently set at 50 fish/day/angler

- Two state have lower limits and two states do not have recreational fisheries (no limits in place)

- Recreational harvest of eel is believed to be low compared to commercial harvest, reductions in all sectors may be warranted given the depleted nature of the stock.





# Monitoring

- Increase commercial and recreational reporting requirements
- Conduct evaluation of ASMFC eel survey program
- Increase yellow eel indices of abundance
- Develop silver eel indices of abundance
- FERC relicensing







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# Habitat

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- Highly supportive of efforts to increase eel passage
- Recommends development of quantifiable eel habitat enhancement goals based on development of a coastwide eel habitat GIS database by the next benchmark stock assessment





# Law Enforcement

- Encourage states to increase penalties for violations
- Increase pre-season coordination of glass eel fishery enforcement efforts
- Synchronize dealer and export reporting
- Increase cooperation and communication regarding violations







# Questions?





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# Adaptive Management

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- Under the adaptive management specifications of the FMP, the Board may vary the requirements specified in Sections 3 (Monitoring) and/or 4 (Fisheries Management) through an addendum.
- If the Board would like to modify the goals and objectives sections it would have to occur through an Amendment.





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# Timeline

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- **Addendum**

1. PDT develops Draft Addendum I for Public Comment – **AUG/SEPT**
2. Board review of DAI – **OCT**
3. Public comment Period – **NOV/DEC**
4. Consider for Final Approval – **FEB 2013**
5. Implementation – **JAN 2014**





# Timeline

- **Amendment**

1. PDT develops PID – **AUG/SEPT**
2. Board review of PID – **OCT**
3. Public comment on PID – **NOV/DEC**
4. Board review of public comment, provides direction on development of Amendment – **FEB 2013**
5. PDT develops Draft amendment I for Public Comment – **MAR/APR 2013**
6. Board review of DAI – **MAY 2013**
7. Public comment Period – **JUNE/JULY 2013**
8. Consider for Final Approval – **AUG 2013**
9. Implementation – **JAN 2014**

