



Technical Committee Report



American Eel Management Board
November 2015

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Background



- Addendum IV requires life cycle survey for states with a glass eel fishery > 750 lbs
- June 2015
 - Maine submitted life cycle survey design to TC
- August 2015
 - TC recommended modifications to original design
- August – October 2015
 - TC Sub-committee worked with Maine to refine survey design



Maine Proposed Survey



- 17-yr survey on glass, yellow, & silver eel stages
- Cobboseecontee Stream Drainage
- Various field sampling and tagging techniques

Activity	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Glass eel fyke netting at stream mouth head-of-tide	daily daily	daily daily	daily daily				
Yellow eel e-fishing or potting mouth to Dam 1				1 - 2 weeks			
Yellow eel recruitment at Dam 1		daily	daily	daily	daily	daily	
Yellow eel potting in lakes			biweekly	biweekly			
Silver eel DIDSON at Dam 2					daily	daily	daily



Maine Proposed Survey



Survey estimates for each eel life stage:

1. Index of abundance
2. Biomass
3. Mortality
4. Average length and weight of eels

Additional estimates for yellow and silver eels:

1. Age of entry into the survey
2. Age structure
3. Presence of parasitic nematode *A. crassus*



TC Recommendations



- Commended Maine for willingness to modify survey design based on TC recommendations
- Remaining issues to be considered and addressed after first field season:
 1. Attempt to eliminate potential for poaching glass eel
 2. Determine if cannibalism of glass eels/elvers is issue
 3. Release location for glass eel should minimize potential recapture
 4. Verification that glass eel distribution is uniform across river width, otherwise adjust abundance calculation
 5. Make sure sufficient numbers of yellow eels are sampled to make age-length key



TC Recommendations



- The survey design was specifically designed for the Cobboosecontee Stream in Maine
 - This survey design may not be directly transferrable to another stream system
- Any additional proposed Life Cycle surveys will need to be reviewed and approved by the TC
- The TC requests an update from Maine after the first study year to evaluate issues/concerns over sampling methodology



Questions?





Addendum IV Implementation Plans



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Background



- Addendum IV implemented a coast wide quota of 907,671 pounds for the yellow eel commercial fishery starting in 2015.
- Two management triggers:
 1. If quota is exceeded by more than 10% in a given year (998,438 pounds)
 2. If the quota is exceeded by any amount for two consecutive years
- Triggering results in automatic State by State Quotas



Background



- States submitted implementation plans that detail how state will monitor/manage if quota is triggered
- (1) the rulemaking process
- (2) the current reporting structure for eels,
- (3) type of reporting used for monitoring
- (4) a mechanism to account for overages
- (5) a mechanism to account for transfers
- (6) any additional management measures planned to control harvest.



Addendum IV Implementation Plans



State	Rulemaking Process	Rulemaking Timeframe	Reporting	Overage Transfer	Additional Measures Planned
ME	DMR Authority	up to 100 days	Monthly harvester. Likely to use swipe card system	Y	Possible seasons and days out by 2017
NH	Director Authority	at least 1 month	Monthly harvester	Y	None, but can if needed
MA	MF Advisory Commission	by March 2016	Weekly dealer (personal bait not counted)	Y	Close H&L gear Sept 1-Dec 31
RI	Director Authority	30 day public comment	Dealer twice a week	Y	None, but can if needed



State	Rulemaking Process	Rulemaking Timeframe	Reporting	Overage Transfer	Additional Measures Planned
CT	DEEP Authority	10 days public notice	Monthly harvester	Y	None, but can if needed
NY	DEC Authority	6 months	Monthly harvester and weekly dealer	Y	Closing pot fishery on Delaware River. Need adjustment to quota through transfers or management addendum.
NJ	Commissioner/Council Rulemaking	3-4 months	Monthly harvester	Y	Limited entry based on 2007-2014 harvest. Possible pot maximum, and seasons. Some through notice process while others up to two years.
DE	Legislature (resumes in Jan 2016)	Legislature Session Jan-June	Daily harvester	Legislature	None, but can if needed

Addendum IV Implementation Plans



State	Rulemaking Process	Rulemaking Timeframe	Reporting	Overage Transfer	Additional Measures Planned
MD	DNR Authority	100 days or 48h with public notice authority	Daily harvester	Y	Harvester permit by 03/2016 with reporting requirement
PRFC	PRFC Authority	1-2 months	Weekly harvester	Y	None, but can if needed
VA	VMRC Authority	1 month	Monthly harvester with dealer check	Y	Possible seasonal closures and possession limits. Quota trigger to implement weekly/daily dealer reports.
NC	NCDMF Authority	Immediate	Monthly dealer and harvester log books	Y	Proactive reporting trigger program to weekly/daily and closure at 85% of quota.

Addendum IV Implementation Plans



State	Rulemaking Process	Rulemaking Timeframe	Reporting	Overage Transfer	Additional Measures Planned
SC	Legislature, but permitting authority	Permit cycle June 30	Montly harvester and dealer	Y	Possible gear restrictions, seasons, catch limits, or closure
GA	Natural Resources Authority	Up to 90 days	Monthly harvester and dealer	Y	Likely close eel commercial fishery if state by state quotas are implemented
FL	Executive Order Rulemaking	Governor-commission meets 5 times a year	Montly harvester, weekly harvester when 50% quota is reached	Y	None, but can if needed. Issue of harvester selling to dealers outside the state and potential double counting of quota

TC Recommendations



- TC Reviewed Plans
- Recommend using harvester reporting to monitor quota
 - Concern of harvester in one state selling to dealers in another state
 - Gets at harvest kept for personal use
- TC recommends updated landings be submitted by February 1st of each year
- Submit Preliminary landings by March 1st
- Board will evaluate landing triggers in May



Questions?





2015 and 2014 FMP Reviews



American Eel Management Board

November 3, 2015

Status of the Fishery: Commercial



- State reported landings of yellow/silver eels were 1,008,003 lbs in 2013 and 1,052,514 lbs in 2014.
 - 4% increase from 2013 to 2014
 - New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia account for 77% of harvest
- Landings of glass eels were reported from Maine, South Carolina and Florida.
 - 20,663 lbs in 2013
 - 12,515 lbs in 2014
 - New glass eel harvest in Florida amounted to 343 lbs in 2013 and 965 lbs in 2014. Closed fishery in 2015.



Status of the Fishery: Recreational



- As of 2009, recreational data are no longer provided for American eel in CRs.
- This is a result of the unreliable design of MRIP that focuses on active fishing sites along coastal and estuarine areas and the high associated PSE.



Stock Status: 2012 Stock Assessment



- American eel stock status is depleted.
- Assessment passed External Peer Review, but no reference points for management use
- Given depleted status, Board acted to reduce fishing mortality on all life stages.
- Board completed Addendum III (2014) and Addendum IV (2015).



Fishery Management Plan



- Fishery Management Plan (2000)
- Addendum I (2006)
- Addendum II (2008)
- Addendum III (2014)
- Addendum IV (2015)



Fishery Management Plan



Glass Eel Fishery Regulations

- All states must implement YOY survey (2000)
- All states must maintain regulations (2000)
- Max of 25 pigmented eels per one pound of glass eels. Use 1/8" mesh to grade eels (2014)
- Maine self imposes a voluntary quota of 11,479 lbs (2014)
- Maine glass eel quota of 9,688 lbs w. payback (2015)
- Maine implements swipe card monitoring program for daily reporting (2014/2015):
 - Harvester to dealer
 - Dealer to dealer
 - Export from state
- Maine is required to implement life cycle survey (2015)



Fishery Management Plan



Glass Eel Fishery Regulations

- PRT Review:
- Harvest of glass eels occurred in Florida in 2013 and 2014
- Board exempted implementation of regulations until Florida demonstrated a fishery exists
- Florida closed the fishery in 2015 through 9" min size limit



Fishery Management Plan



Yellow Eel Fishery Regulations (both Com and Rec)

- Increase in minimum size to 9" (2014)
- ½" x ½" min mesh size for yellow eel pots
- Allowance of 4x4" escape panel of ½" x ½" mesh
- Recreational 25 fish bag limit per day per angler
- Crew and captain allowed 50 fish bag limit per day
- Coastwide harvest cap of 907,671 lbs; the 1998-2010 average harvest (2015)
- State by state allocation triggered if quota exceeded by 10% in one year or by any amount for two years.
- State by state quota requires payback and allows transfers



Fishery Management Plan



Yellow Eel Fishery Regulations (both Com and Rec)

- PRT Review:
- CT implementation of escape panel was delayed but expected by Oct 31, 2015.
- DC implementation of 9" min size was delayed.
- Delaware has not implemented Addendum III requirements. Found out of Compliance.
 - Moratorium on March 18, 2016 unless DE comes back into compliance



Fishery Management Plan



Silver Eel Fishery Regulations

- Seasonal closure from Sept 1 – Dec 31, no take except from baited pots/traps and spears (2014)
- One year exemption for weir fishery in Delaware River and its tributaries in NY (2014)
- NY weir fishery exemption continued, but restricted to 9 permits that may be transferred (2015)



Fishery Management Plan



Silver Eel Fishery Regulations

PRT Review:

- MA does not prohibit hook and line gear from Sept 1-Dec 31, but questions need
- FL does not prohibit pound nets from Sept 1-Dec 31, but no active fishery for past 10-15 years



Fishery Management Plan



Other Management Measures

- Trip level reporting by both harvesters and dealers at least monthly
- Sustainable fishery management plans:
 - Fishing Mortality Plan
 - Transfer Plan quota from yellow to glass
 - Aquaculture Plan: 200 pounds of glass eels if can demonstrate watershed contributes minimally to spawning stock
- All plans must scientifically demonstrate that they will not increase overall fishing mortality



Fishery Management Plan



Other Management Measures

PRT Review:

- New Hampshire and New Jersey do not have dealer reporting, but harvesters report some information on dealers
- Delaware, PRFC, and Florida do not have dealer reporting



De minimis



- FMP stipulates that states may apply for *de minimis* status for each life stage if, for the preceding two years, their average commercial landings constitute less than 1% of the coastwide commercial landings for that life stage.
- New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Georgia requested *de minimis* status for their yellow eel fisheries.
- All states that applied for *de minimis* status for yellow eels met the 1% landings criteria.
- South Carolina requested *de minimis* status for glass eels, but did not meet the 1% landings criteria



PRT Recommendations



- The PRT recommends the Board consider state compliance as mentioned.

Glass – FL (closed fishery)

Yellow – CT, DC, DE (delayed implementation)

Silver – MA, FL (gear closures)

Reporting – NH, NJ, DE, PRFC, and FL

- The PRT recommends the Board approve the *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, South Carolina, and Georgia.





North Carolina Request for Deadline Waiver for Aquaculture Plan



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Background



- Addendum IV allows states to submit Aquaculture Plans
- Harvest must be from watershed that minimally contributes to spawning stock
- Max harvest of 200 pounds of glass eel annually for use in domestic aquaculture
- Plans are due June 1 of preceding year
- Subject to TC and LEC review
- Board approved by Sept 1 of preceding year



North Carolina Request



- Plan would be submitted Dec 1
- Must submit all criteria as detailed in Addendum IV
- Subject to TC and LEC Review
- Board would consider approval at February 2016 meeting
- Potential implementation in 2016

