



Technical Committee Report



American Eel Management Board
February 2016

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

NC Aquaculture Proposal



- NC submitted Aquaculture Plan Dec 2015
 - Request from American Eel Farm for 200 lbs
 - Harvest to occur spring 2016
 - 10 primary and 3 alternate harvest sites
 - Coastal rivers with some level with human impact
 - Sites have full or partial shellfish closures
 - 3 licensed harvesters
 - Daily reporting
 - Various harvest restrictions
 - Eels will be raised to minimum legal size (9") before sale



Criteria for TC Review



- Requirements from Addendum IV
 - Aquaculture Plan to include:
 - » Pounds requested
 - » Harvest method & location
 - » Applicable permits
 - » Facility description
 - » Husbandry methods
 - » Market description
 - » Harvest monitoring
 - » Adequate enforcement
 - Objectively show harvest will occur from a watershed that minimally contributes to the spawning stock of eel



TC Recommendation



- TC reviewed plan in December 2015
 - Requested modifications
- TC reviewed modified plan January 2016
- Specific concerns with Current Plan
 - Should follow 25 pigmented eel tolerance per lb
 - Using 1/8" mesh to remove pigmented eels
 - Concern that many pigmented eels will pass through
 - TC requesting harvest report after first year
 - date, number collected, effort, location, water temp.



TC Recommendation



Harvest must occur from a watershed that minimally contributes to the spawning stock of eel

- NC has no data for eel survival or reproduction within state waters
- TC can not determine if the proposed harvest comes from a watershed that minimally contributes to the spawning stock



TC Recommendation



If NC Aquaculture Plan proposal is approved:

TC requests that NC collect more data

- YOY abundance in harvest rivers
- Water quality data





Advisory Panel Report on NC Aquaculture Plan



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Background



- AP met via conference call
- Comments focused on two major topics:
 1. Current status of American Eel markets
 2. Accountability of collected eels



Identifying Markets



- Requirement, but NC Plan lacks market information
- Current market conditions create AP concern:
 - No exiting culture markets
 - Bait market has ample supply from wild catch
 - Wild market also depressed because glut of inexpensive European eels
 - Difficult to raise cultured eels to food size



Identifying Markets



- Problem exacerbated by high density growout:
 - Cultured eels expected to be 80-90% male
 - Only way to address is bioactive additives, not legal
 - Smaller male eels will end up in already saturated bait market
 - AP concern NC has not addressed male production
- AP included market information to supplement NC's plan.
 - Appendix 1



Accountability



- AP recommends complete accounting from collection through growout
- NC Plan has good monitoring for collection
- Eels dying during husbandry should be kept for inspection
- Should help ensure complete accountability



Other Comments



- Timeframe for proposal not followed in Add IV
- Board granting NC extension creates unfair advantage to other states with Aquaculture interests



Questions?





LEC Comments North Carolina Aquaculture Proposal

Presented to American Eel
Management Board
February 2016



LEC Review

- LEC conference call on January 7, 2016
 - 18 enforcement members participated
 - 2 enforcement representatives from NC
 - 2 management representatives from NC
- LEC reviewed elements of the plan
- LEC memo prepared for management board



LEC Comments

- Supports the plan as presented
 - Supports reporting requirement for gear alteration
 - Supports redundant reporting systems
 - Call-in provisions
 - regular trip-ticket reporting
- Concern about increased enforcement responsibility



SOUTH CAROLINA PROPOSAL



TC Recommendations



- Background – States required to do YOY surveys
- SC has sampled at Goose Creek since 2000
 - Current gear is fyke net
 - Inconsistent data (extreme tides, erosion, vandalism)
- SC installed upstream passage ramps at the site
 - Been operating with fyke nets for past 3 years
 - More effective in collecting YOY eels
- TC supports gear change request
 - Correction factor may be applied to old data for SA





MAINE PROPOSAL



TC Recommendations



- Request – Eliminate 2 closed harvest days/week
- Fishery previously managed by input controls
 - Now managed by quota
- TC supports the elimination of closed days
 - Glass eel harvest is adequately regulated via quota system





Discussion of Addendum IV Yellow Eel Allocations



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Background



- At its November 2015 meeting, the Board added a discussion of Add IV Yellow Eel Allocations to the February Agenda
- Coastwide yellow eel commercial catch cap is 907,671 pounds starting in 2015
- Management Triggers
 - 1.) if catch cap is exceeded by more than 10% in a given year
 - 2.) if catch cap is exceeded for two consecutive years, regardless of amount
- If triggered, automatic implementation of state-by-state allocation



2015 Preliminary Landings



- States/jurisdictions submitted preliminary landings by Feb 1.
- Preliminary 2015 landings are approximately 762,700 pounds
- Subject to change as states still receiving reports
- Compliance reports due in Sept, but will try to compile more final landings by May/August
- Based on preliminary landings there is a low risk of exceeding the 10% cap overage trigger of 998,438 pounds



Questions?

