



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

December 19, 2019

**To:** American Eel Management Board

**From:** American Eel Advisory Panel

**RE:** AP Call Summary

**Participants:** Mitch Feigenbaum (PA), Mari-Beth DeLucia (TNC), Patricia Bryant (ME), John Pedrick (PA), Richard Stoughton (SC)

**Staff:** Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

An Advisory Panel conference call was held on December 19, 2019 to review recent Board actions and provide feedback on the 2019 fishing year performance. Five AP member were in attendance and their comments and recommendations are summarized below.

Staff presented recent management updates, including the approval of Addendum V, the 2019 and 2020 Aquaculture proposals for North Carolina and Maine, and the additional appendix to the Addendum V that outlined the coastwide cap coverage policy.

### Comments

#### Recent Board actions

The AP members on the call expressed concern about the NC aquaculture program given the lack of success in both catching glass eels and growing them out to a legal size.

#### Fishing Performance and Market Demand

**Yellow Eel:** Mitch indicated yellow eel landings coastwide in 2019 are potentially down 50% from 2018. There isn't a much of domestic market for yellow eels; much of the demand is overseas. In 2019, they were at an all-time low in demand that has been linked to the US dollar being strong and the value of the euro has been low. Much of the glass eels that stay in Europe (and not going to overseas Asian markets) increase the demand for glass eels in Maine; additionally, this affects the demand for yellow eels. Over the last 3 years the average price per pound has dropped from \$3.11 to \$2.67. Mitch's group instructed fishermen not to fish because of the low market demand; this was reflected in catch, down 50% from this company's 11 year average. Given the strength in the US economy and its impact on the exchange rate between the dollar and euro, demand for yellow eels may likely remain low into future years.

**Glass Eel:** There was some interest expressed in trying to potentially put forward a glass eel aquaculture proposal for the state of Pennsylvania in future years.

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Mitch's business is pursuing growth enhancements in the feed and have so far spent \$7 million to use supplements in the feed. Mitch's business intends to submit a glass eel aquaculture proposal for ME within the next few years.

Average price per pound in Maine ranged from approximately \$1,700 to \$2,300. In South Carolina the average price per pound was approximately \$1,500. The number of eels caught per pound is much lower in Maine (larger glass eels than South Carolina).

### **Other Business**

The group was in agreement that there needs to be a revitalization of the AP membership given the turnout on the call- only 5 of the 15 AP members were in attendance. There were no commercial yellow eel fishermen on the call. The group asked that the Board consider submitting new nominations to the AP to improve participation and attendance. Last the group was in agreement that new AP Chair should be nominated given Mari-Beth has been serving as chair beyond 2 years. AP members should consider whether they would be willing to take on this role starting in 2020.