



ALLIANCE™

[.https://www.globalseafood.org](https://www.globalseafood.org) Fisheries

Future of European eel fisheries may hinge on a coordinated management regime

2 January 2024

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

A coordinated management plan aims to promote the recovery of Mediterranean eels

The future of the iconic and coveted European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), a mainstay of Mediterranean cuisine could look brighter if a new coordinated plan to conserve the species, including partial commercial fishery closures and a complete ban on recreational eel fishing, is successful.

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) hopes that a monitoring network can identify effective management measures to improve eel populations.

Eels are a critically endangered species that FAO says faces threats like climate change, habitat loss, pollution and overfishing along their migration routes, which originate in the Sargasso Sea and end in river systems in the Mediterranean region and in northern Europe. In 2020, the migration of young European eel to freshwater habitats reached an all-time low, FAO reports.

“The European eel, the habitats that host its different life stages and the livelihoods it sustains require



The future of European eel fisheries may depend on a coordinated plan to conserve the species, including seasonal closures and a ban on recreational fishing.

action and protection on all fronts: biological, environmental, socioeconomic,” said Elisabetta Betulla Morello, one of the editors of the report and a GFCM officer. “Cooperation is essential for identifying and implementing adequate measures, not only to manage fisheries but also to protect the environment and the socioeconomic setting revolving around this species.”

(<https://link.chtbl.com/aquapod>).

In its **report** (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc7252en>), GFCM provides a detailed overview of eel fisheries, habitats and the biological and ecological features of various stocks. The report, which offers a comprehensive look at the current management and conservation measures and performs a model-based appraisal of the core measures, identified lagoons as a crucial habitat for eels in the region. Lagoons, however, face challenges like climate change, fishing pressure and pollution.

In 2022, the GFCM adopted a multiannual management plan for Mediterranean eels, including a partial closure of eel fisheries for six months each year and a total, permanent ban on recreational fishing of European eel at all stages – glass eel, yellow eel and silver eel, and in all habitats – freshwater, brackish and marine.

A socio-economic study forms part of the research program's next phase, which will also expand the existing habitat databases and collect information to appraise management measures.

Read the full report. (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc7252en>).

@GSA_Advocate (https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate).

Author



RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE

editor@globalseafood.org (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>).

Copyright © 2024 Global Seafood Alliance

All rights reserved.