

**Terms of Reference
Zonal Advisory Meeting**

Fifth meeting of the Canadian Eel Science Working Group

October 9-11, 2007*

Location: Montreal

Chairpersons: David Cairns and Yves Mailhot

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context

The American eel is extensively distributed in eastern Canada, occurring widely in freshwater, estuaries, bays, and (during migration to and from the spawning ground) continental shelves and the deep ocean. American eels are considered to be panmictic, meaning that the species forms a single stock. American eel ingress to the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario collapsed in the 1980s, prompting widespread concern about the conservation status of the species. American eels are managed by provincial agencies in Ontario and Quebec, and by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the Atlantic Provinces.

In 2006 the American eel was assessed as Special Concern by COSEWIC. COSEWIC has scheduled the species' next assessment for 2011. Evaluation of American eel status in Canada is hampered by the limited understanding of key features of the eel's biology and ecology. Because of this, scientific work on eels in Canada is oriented more towards basic biology and development of data series, rather than to quantitative stock assessment. Since 2003, the Canadian Eel Science Working Group (CESWoG) has served as a forum to exchange information among scientists working on eels in the various jurisdictions, and to set objectives and coordinate projects relating to eel science and conservation.

Objectives

1. To review recent progress in eel research and monitoring in eastern Canada, including estimation of eel production from fresh and marine waters in the Southern Gulf, estimation of predation rates on stocked elvers, development of a young of the year index for the lower St. Lawrence, investigation approaches for the genetic affinity of St. Lawrence River eels, and modeling of eel population dynamics.
2. To review developments in eel management, including the draft National Eel Management Plan, eel conservation and management in the US, and developments in Canada-US coordination of eel management and science.
3. To define the objectives and methods of a GIS-based program to evaluate impacts of artificial barriers to eel migration, and to establish habitat equivalency units that will aid in setting priorities for habitat mitigation.

Output

Meeting Proceedings, CSAS Proceedings Series

Participation

Biologists working on American eel issues for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Quebec Ministère des ressources naturelles et de la faune, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, other scientists with an interest in eel science and conservation, managers, industry stakeholders.

*Updated – September 26, 2007