



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL ENVIRONMENT  
Directorate F – Green Diplomacy & Multilateralism  
Unit ENV.F.3 – Global Environmental Cooperation and Multilateralism  
Head of Unit

Brussels,  
DG ENV.F3 (CITES) Ares(2024)

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CITES MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES  
OF THE RANGE STATES OF *ANGUILLA ANGUILLA***

**Albania**  
**Algeria**  
**Belarus**  
**Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
**Denmark** (*Faroe Islands*)  
**Egypt**  
**Georgia**  
**Iceland**  
**Lebanon**  
**Libya**  
**Mauritania**  
**Monaco**  
**Moldova**  
**Montenegro**

**Morocco**  
**North Macedonia**  
**Norway**  
**Russian Federation**  
**Serbia**  
**Switzerland**  
**Syrian Arab Republic**  
**Tunisia**  
**Türkiye**  
**Ukraine**  
**United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland** (*including Gibraltar,  
Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey*)

**Subject: CITES CoP20 - potential uplisting and conservation of *Anguilla anguilla*  
(European eel)**

Dear colleagues,

As outlined in CITES [Notification to the Parties No. 2004/062](#), the EU has started preparations for the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which is planned to take place in Uzbekistan (Samarkand) 24<sup>th</sup> November - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

The Scientific Review Group (SRG), which gathers the Scientific Authorities of all Member States of the European Union (EU), is currently considering the conservation status of and trade level in several species as basis for possible amendment of the CITES Appendices, including potential uplisting of species currently included in Appendix II that might benefit from strengthened measures under the Convention.

In 2009, *Anguilla anguilla* (European eel) was listed in CITES Appendix II, and exports of the species from the EU have been prohibited under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations since 2010 by the publication of annual zero-export quotas for specimens taken from the wild. Likewise, imports of the species from third countries into the EU are suspended in accordance with EU

legislation<sup>1</sup>. Despite efforts to regulate trade in *A. anguilla*, the species remains categorised as Critically Endangered by the IUCN Red List, with the most recent assessment conducted in 2018. On the basis that recruitment of glass and yellow eels has been estimated to have declined by over 90% since the 1960s-1970s, the species meets the biological criteria for inclusion in Appendix I, specifically criterion Ci) of Annex 1 of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) - an observed marked decline in its wild population size which is ongoing. This marked decline represents a 15-20% reduction of the baseline for a commercially exploited “low productivity” species and is in line with the criteria outlined in Annex 5 of Res. Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17).

For each year 2022-2024, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has advised there should be zero catches in all habitats for all life stages of *A. anguilla*, applying to both recreational and commercial catches, including for the purposes of restocking and aquaculture. Commercial landings and international trade in *A. anguilla* have nonetheless remained high, and overexploitation is believed to act synergistically with the suite of threats facing the species, which also include barriers to migration, habitat loss and degradation, and pollution. Large-scale illegal trade in *A. anguilla* has also been reported, including the declaration of illegal *A. anguilla* shipments as non-CITES listed *Anguilla* species (as detailed in AC30 Doc. 18.1).

As range States for *A. anguilla*, EU Member States are thus concerned about the current conservation status of the species and are considering additional measures to improve its status and regulation of international trade. Noting that *A. anguilla* is a panmictic species, coordinated efforts for its protection across its distribution range are needed. We would therefore welcome, as a range State, your views on whether stricter measures under CITES, such as an Appendix I listing, would help to ensure the future survival of *A. anguilla* and align with the current ICES advice.

The EU attaches high importance to consultation and close cooperation with range States during preparations for the Conference of the Parties, and this is why we are writing to you to ask you for your views on this matter. To ensure a timely preparation of possible listing proposals for CITES CoP20, we would appreciate if you could share your views with us by **Friday, 22 November 2024, to [env-cites@ec.europa.eu](mailto:env-cites@ec.europa.eu)**.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

*e-signed*  
Cristina DE AVILA

Copy:

- CITES Scientific Authorities of the Ranges States of *Anguilla anguilla*
- EU Delegations in the Ranges States of *Anguilla anguilla*
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- European Commission, DG Environment, Unit F.2: [Davor.PERCAN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Davor.PERCAN@ec.europa.eu)

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<sup>1</sup> [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2770 of 12 December 2023 prohibiting the introduction into the Union of specimens of certain species of wild fauna and flora in accordance with Council Regulation \(EC\) No 338/97 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein](#)