

## **Estonian Eel Management Plan – Executive summary**

Estonian Eel Management Plan based on the Regulation EC No 1100/2007.

In connection with Eel Management Plan (EMP) Estonian water bodies were divided into two management units on the basis of the formation of eel stock.

- 1) Narva River Basin District – population of eel based entirely on stocking
- 2) West-Estonian Basin District (coastal waters and West-Estonian inland water bodies) – natural population of eel

### **Measures planned within the EMP**

#### *Narva River Basin District*

The natural status of eel stock in Narva River Basin before the construction of hydropower station was not very abundant (annual catch 1,8 tons L. Võrtsjärv and 3-6 tons L. Peipsi), therefore the contribution into recruitment was ten times lower than at present. Due to permanent stocking and rather fetterless downstream migration, the 40% escapement objective of silver eel in Narva River Basin is achieved. On the basis of financing of local fishermen the present escapement capacity exceed the pristine escapement several times and there is no need of reduction in fishing effort.

The hydroelectric power station lying on Russian side totally hindered the natural pass of eel into Narva River Basin, but according to tagging and recapture results it is not obstacle for downstream migration (2% of tagged silver eel escaped from Narva River Basin were caught in the Danish Straits).

Without stocking a huge area with a high production potential will be cut off for recruitment.

The main proposal is to increase annual stocking amount of eel in the water bodies of Narva River Basin and to enhance the stocking with additional financing using the European Fisheries Fund.

### *West-Estonian Basin District*

The main aim in this district is reduction in fishery.

As in most of fyke nets, used in coastal waters, eel is caught as a by-catch consisting less than 1% of total, there is no need to decrease the number of licences for this gear, except small fyke nets in line specialized on catch of eel.

In 2009 the number of licences for small fyke nets in line was reduced approximately 15% already. For 2013 this number will be cut down up to 50% of the present number.

Catch of eel in West-Estonia, mostly in coastal waters, should to be less than 6 tons per year, set in relation to the catches in 2004-2006 (12 tons). Actually, the requirement of 50% reduction in eel catch in maritime areas is followed up to now already as in 2008 in coastal waters 4.8 tons of eel were harvested. In spite of this licences of small fyke nets will be reduced 50%. In case of the increase of eel catches in coastal waters of Estonia, the number of licences for small fyke nets will be cut down up to zero or additionally other types of fyke nets with mouth height up to 1 m will be reduced.

Due to the above mentioned measures, 40% escapement of silver eel from the waters of the West Estonian Basin District is guaranteed.

### **Control measures and monitoring**

Management of eel stock in Estonia is under the control of the Government. Fisheries are managed by the Fishery Department of the Ministry of the Environment dealing with restocking and management measures for fish stocks conservation, the Fishery Economics Department of the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for issuing fishing permits and collecting catch data on commercial fishing activities.

The number of fishing gear allowed to use for eel fishery is divided between fishermen and issued by special fishing permit. The Estonian Environmental Inspectorate is responsible for control of fishing activities which allows to ensure that number of fishing gear issued by fishing permits will be not exceeded.

Monitoring of the implementation measures will be continued – monitoring of fishing effort, yellow and silver eel landings and stocks are estimated separately.