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Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
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The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advises zero catches of the critically endangered European eel in all habitats, reducing non-fisheries mortalities to zero and restoring the eel habitats¹.

The conservation and management of European eel must be based on fisheries and environmental considerations to tackle all human-induced mortalities. Closing eel fisheries in isolation will not be sufficient to recover eels. Further ambition is needed to address environmental mortalities, while continuing to take fisheries measures.

Member States take various measures through their eel management plans (EMP) under the Eel Regulation² and other legal instruments:

- Temporary fishing closures are set at EU level under the Fishing Opportunities Regulation;
- The Water Framework Directive requires a good status of waters, including river continuity³;
- The Nature Restoration Regulation requires restoring rivers to free-flowing⁴;
- In line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the trade of European eel from and to the EU remains strictly prohibited⁵.

Regarding Spain, it has established one national EMP with several specific regional plans and one transboundary plan together with Portugal. Those plans contain various measures, such as reducing or closing fisheries, predator control, eel trap and transport, removing migration barriers, improving water quality, restocking⁶.

¹ Most recent ICES advice published in November 2025: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/European_eel_i_Anguilla_anguilla_i_throughout_its_natural_range/27203028?file=59290940 and ICES report from the Workshop in support of this advice, where country reports including for Spain are annexed https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Joint_EIFAAC_ICES_GFCM_Working_Group_on_Eels_WGEEL_/30488120. ICES Eel Stock Annex provides for a comprehensive assessment of the stock and the impacts on the stock: https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Stock_Annex_European_eel_i_Anguilla_anguilla_i_throughout_its_natural_range/24517486?file=43077457

² Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 of 18 September 2007 establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel, OJ L 248, 22.9.2007, pp. 17–23.

³ The Water Framework Directive requires Member States, to implement measures to ensure that the status of water bodies, including as regards river continuity and fish communities, does not deviate, or only slightly, from undisturbed conditions.

⁴ The Nature Restoration Regulation requires Member States to make inventories of their artificial barriers to the connectivity of surface waters, and to plan for removals of barriers, primarily addressing obsolete ones, in order to reach the EU-wide objective of restoring 25000 km of rivers to free-flowing rivers between 2020 and 2030.

⁵ The competent scientific authorities of the EU Member States agreed unanimously that they would not be able to issue a non-detriment finding for the export of European eel specimens, as it is critically endangered, as required under Article IV(2)(a) of CITES. Therefore, since 2010, a zero-export quota has been issued and published on the CITES website. Regarding imports into the EU on European eel, the scientific review group decided on a general negative opinion for all range states since 2010.

⁶ EMP implementation is variable. Details about a most recent progress of Member States in implementing their EMPs and measures under the Eel Regulation, including by Spain, are provided in the ICES advice in subject

The Spanish proposal for including eel in Spain's List of endangered species is a national initiative. European eel is not listed under the Habitats Directive. Member States may take more stringent measures than at EU level⁷.

The Commission continues to work with Member States and relevant stakeholders to help rebuild the eel stock.

published in 2025 https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/EU_request_for_technical_evaluation_of_the_Eel_Management_Plan_progress_reports/28381268?file=54121004 and in the ICES report from the Workshop in support of this advice https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Workshop_for_the_Technical_Evaluation_of_EU_Member_States_Eel_Regulation_Progress_Reports_for_Submission_in_2024_2025_WKEMP4_/28788749?file=54098411 .

⁷ For example, Slovenia has included European eel as a strictly protected species in their country and Ireland has put in place a ban on eel fishing.