The Status the American Eel, *Anguilla rostrata* (Leseueur, 1817), in Jamaica

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Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries
Kingston, Jamaica

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Presentation Outline

• Background on Jamaica’s Eel Fishery
• Current Status
• Management
• Challenges
• Recommendation/Conclusion
• Started in 2013 with an exploratory licence
  • Species: *Anguilla rostrata*
  • Stage: Juvenile – Glass eel
  • Approximately 61 Rivers
  • Approximately 45 Kgs of Glass eel were caught
  • Season runs from October – March each year

• Two other companies were granted an exploratory licence
  • 2015 & 2018
Eighteen (18) rivers spanning eight (8) parishes have been identified and approved for Exploratory Glass Eel fishing.
RIVERS OF JAMAICA

Martha Brae

Rio Minho

Black River

Wag Water
APPROVED FISHING GEAR

FYKE NETS

Morris 2017, Marsden, 2018
## Catch Rates & Trade of Glass Eel 2013-2020

**Source:** National Fisheries Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Catch (Kg)</th>
<th>Exported (Kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Oct-Mar</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Jan-Mar</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Oct-Mar</td>
<td>114.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Oct-Mar</td>
<td>127.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Oct-Mar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Jan-Mar</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Dec-Feb</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Record of Glass Eel Caught & Exported**

- Exported through Canada to Asia, mainly Hong Kong

**Source:** National Fisheries Authority
Table showing Quantity and Value of *Imports* of Anguilla Species into Jamaica between 2005 and 2010.

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

Summary Total for 2005-2010
- **Total Quantity (Kg):** 5,956.67
- **Total Value ($US):** 50,575.84

**Import of Fresh/Chilled Eel (Anguilla Spp.)**

- 2005: 1,101.42 Kg, 388 $US
- 2006: 8,976.23 Kg, 6,455.33 $US
- 2007: 4,041.70 Kg, 3,595.81 $US

**Import of Frozen Eel (Anguilla spp.)**

- 2005: 5,926.91 Kg, 11,875.51 $US
- 2006: 8,730.68 Kg
- 2007: 4,455.33 $US
The American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) can be found in rivers and streams, however, there still exist a knowledge gap in its current status.

**Information Gap** such as

- Population size,
- Population trends,
- Geographic distribution,
- Threats to the species.
SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT

Lead Agencies
- The National Fisheries Authority
- VSD for export and import permits

Application of a fishing licences from the NFA
Application of Catch Certificate from the NFA
Application of Export Permit from the VSD
Submit end of season report to the NFA

Specific rivers are allocated to each licence holder
The report include a data table that reference quantity caught in relation to specific rivers, physical and environmental conditions
CHALLENGES

- The last 7 years suggests that there is a very small recruitment of glass eel....Might not be sufficient to maintain an economically viable and sustainable fishery.
- Reduction in water flow in many rivers and stream across the country
- Monitoring of Catch data
- Climate change: Drought, flooding, rise in temperature and impact on the fishing season.
• We support the application of the precautionary approach to this fishery.

• The NFA continues to monitor the site specific catch rate with a view to understand the differences and/or correlations.

• Given the how and where the American eel spawn, how the juvenile recruitment is dispersed, we know that it is difficult to accurately determine the spawning biomass, the abundance level of recruitment and optimal harvest levels.

• Hence a framework that supports sharing of catch data as well as indices of recruitment within the region could be useful.

• Investigation into the economic impact of this fishery should also be conducted.

• There is a need for also training and research into how our river systems, barriers/dams impact on recruitment.

• What about opportunities for Aquaculture???
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ANY QUESTIONS?

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