

eaa

The Voice of
European Anglers

The background of the entire page is a photograph of three children standing in shallow water, likely a beach or tidal flat, during sunset or sunrise. The children are silhouetted against the bright, colorful sky. They are holding fishing rods, and their reflections are visible in the calm water. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and yellow near the horizon. The water is dark with gentle ripples.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

EAA – European Anglers Alliance

Rue de la Loi 81 a, 2nd floor ... 1000 Brussels, Belgium ... phone: +32 2 233 99 444 0
website: www.eaa-europe.eu ... e-mail: info@eaa-europe.eu

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David Vertegaal (13) ... European Union 2024 (22) ... Tatsuhiko Maeda (24) ... Hikaru Itakura (24, 25)

1. President's Forward

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN ANGLERS ALLIANCE

This is the first of our annual reports to the membership. Following feedback received from the members, it became apparent that the Board should do more in being transparent to you as to EAA activities over the year, and I sincerely hope that this report fulfils that need.

We decided to write this report for the calendar year to better align with our financial year and, of course, you will be getting the normal updates from the team at the General Assembly in Cork in September and I hope to have the opportunity of meeting you all then.

This was the end of my first year as your President and taking over this position from Fred was always going to be a challenge, given his dynamism, leadership and knowledge of all things European. I have had to speak to him a few times to make sure that I am on the right track and his support has been brilliant.

Since Fred left and Miro stood down as a Board member we have a slimmed down Board of 4 people, myself, Markus, Florian and David. I must also take this opportunity of thanking Miro for all the work that he has put in as a Board member and of



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and take a look around!



particular note is his work in Chairing the Improvements sub-group whose recommendations we are putting in to place.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for the hard work that they have put in over the last year to ensure that we are running a successful business. This is work that members rarely see but is invaluable to our success.

Given my experience in the corporate world and being a Director of other companies I have been tweaking the way that the Board works; we now have a Declarations of Interest Register which is reviewed at each Board meeting, there is in place an expenses policy for those staff members of EAA who wish to travel and attend events on behalf of the EAA, we have delegated budgets for the Chairs of the Freshwater and Sea sub groups for such events as they are best placed to ensure that these meet the aims and objectives of the EAA. These actions ensure that the governance of the EAA meets present requirements.

Over this year we have strengthened our relationship with EFTTA (European Fishing Tackle Trade Association), I have regular meetings with their Chair and every 6 months we hold joint Board meetings. One at the Berlin Angling Fair (Angelwelt

Berlin) and one after the EAA sub group meetings in Brussels. This collaboration has enabled both organisations to obtain a better understanding of our needs going forward.

One notable event that took place at the end of 2025 was that we were approached by both the French Angling Organisation FNPf (Fédération Nationale de la Pêche en France) and the Estonian Fishing Club Union (MTÜ Eesti Kalastusklubide Liit) to consider membership of EAA.

The result of that is that you will be meeting their representatives in Cork to formally vote on their applications. This expansion will be a momentous achievement following the Angling Council of Ireland joining us last year.

Kind regards



Mark Owen
President
European Anglers Alliance

2. About the EAA

Mission and Vision

Read more on our
webpage about our
Mission & Vision!

Mission: Protecting fish, waters, and the future of recreational angling in Europe
Vision: Healthy waters and thriving fish, supported by sustainable and responsible angling across Europe

Protecting fish, waters and anglers across Europe

Angling depends on healthy waters and abundant fish populations. Protecting rivers, lakes and seas therefore lies at the heart of the EAA's work. We support conservation, habitat restoration and sustainable fisheries management to ensure that Europe's waters remain healthy and accessible for anglers and nature alike.

Read more on our
webpage about
Recreational Angling!

Protecting fish and waters through European policy

Read more on our
webpage about
Angling Tourism!

European policies shape the future of aquatic ecosystems, fish populations and recreational angling across Europe. EAA advocates on key EU laws and strategies – including the Common Fisheries Policy, the Water Framework Directive, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Nature Restoration Law – to help protect water quality, restore ecosystems and improve river connectivity.





Fish species at the heart of our advocacy

Healthy fish populations are essential for thriving aquatic ecosystems and sustainable recreational fisheries. Across Europe, many species face pressures from habitat loss, migration barriers, pollution and climate change. EAA advocates for the conservation and sustainable management of key fish species across Europe. Explore below some of the species central to our work.

Read more on our webpage about Positions & Resolutions!

The EAA stands up for anglers across Europe

Read more on our webpage about News – we have for you!

With strong alliances and science-backed action, we promote sustainable fishing, fair access to waters, and responsible angling for all. Together, we keep recreational angling alive – today and for the next generation.



3. The EAA Office – In the Heart of Europe

Located in the heart of Brussels' EU quarter at Rue de la Loi 81a, the EAA office provides the association with a strategic base at the centre of European policymaking. Within walking distance of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, it enables EAA to engage directly with the institutions where European policies are developed.

From here, EAA coordinates its European activities, works closely with EU institutions and partner organisations, and represents the interests of recreational anglers wherever European policies affecting fisheries and the environment are shaped.

The office occupies the second floor and comprises a spacious meeting room, three private offices, a kitchenette and a shower.

The meeting room is fully equipped for hybrid meetings, featuring a large screen and professional audio and video conferencing facilities. It hosts the EAA's annual April Subgroup Meetings, as well as meetings with members, lobbying and advocacy partners, and other stakeholders throughout the year. The office has also welcomed European Commission officials for face-to-face meetings and discussions on key policy issues.

The Brussels office is the workplace of EAA Secretary General and lobbyist Jan Kappel, who coordinates the association's European advocacy activities from Brussels. Further offices are available for EAA members when on mission in Brussels.

The office is shared with EFTTA, the European Fishing Tackle & Trade Association, reflecting the close cooperation between the two organisations and their shared commitment to safeguarding the future of recreational angling in Europe. EFTTA occasionally holds board meetings in the meeting room and has its statutory seat at this address. EAA is also expected to transfer its statutory seat here in the near future.

The Brussels office serves as the European headquarters of both EAA and EFTTA, providing a central hub for advocacy, cooperation and the representation of recreational angling at the European level.

It offers workspace for at least four members of staff, as well as one or more trainees. For example, EFTTA hosted a trainee here from December 2025 until the end of March 2026.

4. The EAA General Assembly 2025 in Vienna, Austria

Strengthening Europe's Angling Community

From 3rd to 7th September 2025, Austria had the honour of hosting the General Assembly of the European Anglers Alliance (EAA). Traditionally, the meetings are held annually at the invitation of an EAA member.

Delegates from across Europe gathered in Vienna at the invitation of the Österreichisches Kuratorium für Fischerei und Gewässerschutz (ÖKF) to exchange experiences and discuss the future of recreational angling.

In addition to the working sessions, presentations of national initiatives by the host country were an informative and valued part of the programme. They not only offered valuable insights into current develop-

ments but also highlighted the strong spirit of cooperation within the European angling community.

Kurt Pinter (BOKU University Vienna) presented the EU-funded project ProtectFish, including Austrian field studies on impacts of cormorant predation on fish stocks. A PIT-tag study on graylings in the River Traun showed that around 50 percent of tagged fish were predated.

As a migratory bird, the cormorant does not recognise national borders; the presentation highlighted the need for a pan-European cormorant management based on reliable scientific data.





Steven Weiss (University of Graz) addressed the development of otter populations and the challenges they pose for fish populations in Austria as well as Bavaria. His presentation focused on finding an appropriate balance between species protection and adaptive population management. The discussion demonstrated the EAA's role in connecting science, practice and policy.

The ÖKF study "Recreational Angling in Austria," conducted in cooperation with the responsible ministry, showed the social and economic importance of recreational fishing. The findings underlined the value of reliable data and evidence-based arguments for effective lobbying and advocacy at European level.

Looking towards the future of angling, Ramona Hani (ÖFG1880) presented her work on women and young talents in recreational fishing. Her contribution highlighted the importance of diversity, inclusion and the active engagement of new target groups to ensure the long-term development of the angling community.

The excursion to the "LIFE Boat 4 Sturgeons" focused on an ambitious conservation project linked to the International Commission for the Protection of the

Danube River (ICPDR). An innovative floating boat located directly on the Danube is used to breed and raise juvenile sturgeons for releasing them into the Lower Danube and Danube Delta.

The visit provided an inspiring example of international cooperation in fish conservation.

The EAA is represented as an observer within the ICPDR. With the commission headquartered in Vienna, ÖKF takes on this role on behalf of the Alliance, representing the interests of recreational anglers. As the Danube connects numerous countries and ecosystems, international cooperation remains essential for the sustainable protection of fish populations and aquatic habitats.

The days in Vienna clearly demonstrated that the strength of the EAA extends far beyond its lobbying and policy work. It lies in the exchange of ideas, experiences and friendship between people and organisations across Europe.

Throughout the General Assembly, a strong sense of European solidarity was evident in the discussions, personal encounters and shared experiences.

The 2025 General Assembly provided a powerful reminder of what the EAA represents: a committed European community united by shared values and a common responsibility for fish, waters and nature.

For example, Niels Breve, who was recently promoted for his work on sturgeon reintroduction in The Netherlands, was a special guest from Sportvisunie, giving him the opportunity to meet Thomas Friedrich, one of his external examiners.



5. Subgroup Sea

During 2025, the subgroup sea met twice physically and once digitally. The physical meetings took place April 8th in Brussels and September 4th in Vienna. On December 16th, a digital meeting focusing on the Control Regulation was held.

In Brussels, Joana Patricio and Carlos Fernandez-Baladron from the European Commission (DG MARE) attended the meeting, focusing on the Control Regulation's article 55 for recreational fisheries. Joana Patricio also attended part of the December meeting.

REC FISH FORUMS

On April 8th, our European Parliament Forum on Recreational Fisheries and aquatic environment organized its first policy event of 2025 inside the European Parliament. The topic was recognition of the socio-economic importance of recreational fishing, and the event was hosted by MEP André Rodrigues.

On November 5th, the second event of the year was held. Focus was on the urgent challenges facing the Baltic Sea ecosystem, its dependent species such as the wild salmon and the many communities depending on the good husbandry of our aquatic ecosystems. The event included the movie screening of Emilie Björkman's movie "A Baltic salmon requiem – FREE FALLING". The event was hosted by MEP Nicolas Herbst.

IMPORTANT TOPICS 2025

- **Evaluation of the CFP – consultation reply and position paper calling for a full recognition of angling in the CFP.**
- **Revision of the control regulation incl. mandatory registration of anglers and some of their catches, such as seabass and cod.**



- **The ICES advice methodology such as MSY is critically scrutinized by EAA members. In the process the EAA has rallied the support of many NGO's to plead for a reform that will consider a more progressive stock rebuilding, as well as exchanges with scientists and the COM on this point. This ties into our long-standing call for more natural age and size structure of fish stocks (MSFD descriptors D3C3).**
- **Multi-Annual Plan for the Baltic and the so-called 5 % Blim rule in article 4.6, a critical safeguard against annual quota decisions that would lead to overfishing and fish stock collapse. The Baltic Sea MAP (covering stocks of herring, cod and sprat) was the first MAP to be adopted, and the Baltic herring stocks have been an important case study.**
- **Position paper on offshore wind farms.**

The marine workspace is characterized by many on-going or recurrent topics like the annual TAC and quota discussions, including ICES advice, COM proposals and council meetings. The EAA is represented in various Advisory Councils.

EAA held two vice-chair positions in the ACs – Laura Pisano in the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC, one of five vice chairs) and Glenn Douglas in the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC).

We also engage in the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) and North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC). Seabass, pollack, bluefin tuna and Baltic salmon were the individual species discussed the most in 2025.





6. Subgroup Freshwater

The past year has been highly active for the EAA Freshwater Subgroup, with discussions and actions focused on some of the most pressing challenges facing Europe's freshwater ecosystems and fisheries. Across the two meetings held in Vienna (September 2025) and Brussels (April 2026), members shared national experiences and strengthened cooperation on policy, conservation, and practical freshwater management.

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

A major strategic priority has been the defence of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and related environmental legislation. Through the Living Rivers Europe (LRE) coalition, EAA has actively opposed attempts to weaken European water protection rules.

Members expressed serious concern that proposed regulatory changes could create more exemptions for activities such as hydropower development, mining, and other infrastructure projects with potentially significant ecological impacts. The subgroup agreed that maintaining strong legal protection for Europe's rivers remains one of the most important political priorities for the coming years.

HYDROPOWER

Hydropower impacts on fish migration and river ecology remained another key focus. The Dutch example of successfully challenging harmful hydropower projects through long-term fish mortality data, legal pressure, and targeted advocacy was highlighted as an important best-practice model. Members agreed that similar approaches could be highly relevant in other countries where hydropower continues to pose

barriers to migratory fish and river restoration. Practical guidance developed from these experiences will support future advocacy within the EAA network.

SALMON

The subgroup also continued its strong engagement in salmon conservation through the EAA Salmon Task Force and cooperation with NASCO. Atlantic salmon populations remain under significant pressure in many river systems, and national 7-year conservation plans are currently being revised. Members were encouraged to engage with national authorities to ensure ambitious and science-based conservation measures.

At the same time, the spread of pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) continues to require coordinated monitoring Northern Europe. While some countries reported declining observations, the species remains a concern, underlining the importance of continued international data sharing and adaptive management.

INVASIVE SPECIES

The issue of invasive species has gained further importance. Zebra and quagga mussels continue to spread across European lakes and rivers, creating both ecological and economic problems. Once established, eradication is virtually impossible, making prevention the primary management tool. Members exchanged experiences on biosecurity, awareness campaigns, and containment strategies. There was broad agreement that improved public outreach and stronger cross-border cooperation are essential to limit further spread.

RIVER RESTORATION

River restoration and barrier removal remain among the most encouraging developments in freshwater conservation. Several countries reported successful projects involving dam removals, culvert replacement, and restoration of fish migration routes. Members emphasised that both large dam removals and small barrier removals can deliver significant ecological benefits. The Open Rivers Programme was highlighted as an important funding opportunity for accelerating such projects across Europe. The subgroup recognised anglers as increasingly important drivers of restoration efforts through advocacy, field knowledge, fundraising, and practical implementation.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The subgroup also addressed emerging challenges linked to climate change and ecosystem resilience. Rising water temperatures, increased disease pressure – particularly Proliferative Kidney Disease (PKD) in brown trout – and unexpected ecological effects in restored rivers all illustrate the growing complexity of freshwater management. These developments reinforce the need for stronger scientific monitoring, improved diagnostics, and closer cooperation between anglers, researchers, and public authorities.

BEAVER

Finally, discussions around beaver management illustrated the increasing need to balance species protection with river functionality and fish migration. Members reported very different national approaches, ranging from strict protection to active management and zoning systems. The subgroup concluded that locally adapted solutions will be necessary to manage growing conflicts between biodiversity objectives and fisheries conservation.

Overall, the work of the Freshwater Subgroup during 2025-2026 confirmed that Europe's freshwater eco-systems face growing pressure from climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and policy challenges. At the same time, cooperation within EAA continues to strengthen.

By sharing knowledge, coordinating advocacy, and supporting practical conservation actions, the Freshwater Subgroup remains an important platform for protecting healthy rivers and sustainable fish populations across Europe.

7. Joint Subgroup

The joint subgroup consists of members from the EAA and covers topics that cannot be attributed to the freshwater or sea subgroups and topics relating to the broader organization. In addition, preparations for the General Assembly are being made within this subgroup.

Some topics appear on the agenda as a matter of course and are addressed at every meeting, while others are timely because a decision can and need be made regarding them. Across the two meetings held in Vienna (September 2025) and Brussels (April 2026), the joint subgroup enjoyed very good attendance and covered the following topics:

LEAD RESTRICTIONS

The EU is preparing a proposal to restrict the use of fishing weights. While this initially appeared set to become a ban on both use and sale, the proposal has recently been amended to cover only a sales ban. The subgroup has pledged that the EAA will make efforts to lobby – together with the EFFT – for a ban on both sale and use.

PROTECTFISH AND CORMORANTS

In Vienna our host presented its LIFE YELLOW project and there has been discussion about predators that affect – or could affect – fish populations. All members agreed that the cormorant, in particular, requires our attention. The EU Horizon Project is particularly relevant, with an emphasis on predator management. The next steps of this project will be presented at the upcoming General Assembly. Apart from this European approach, various members report that more measures are being employed in their countries to control cormorant populations.

STECF (SOCIO-ECONOMICS)

The subgroup members agreed that current socio-economic datasets are outdated or incomplete, limiting the sector's advocacy power. The U.S. model was cited as an example of advanced methodology Europe could learn from. Studies into the value of recreational angling are being conducted or have been announced in various European member states.

The subgroup stresses the importance of harmonised, accessible, regularly updated data to influence the Commission, ACs and national governments. Momentum is improving, but more coordinated effort is needed.

EAA GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND NEW MEMBERS

During the Joint Subgroup Meeting in Vienna, The Angling Council of Ireland announced its intention to host the 2026 General Assembly. The subgroup members responded with delight to this announcement. At the Meeting in Brussels (2026), preparations were made and topics discussed for this General Assembly.

Delegations of the Fédération Nationale de la Pêche en France and MTÜ Eesti Kalastusklubide Liit were present to express their interest in also becoming a member of the EAA family.

The subgroup members viewed their presence as a very welcome addition and appreciate their expertise and enthusiasm. A mutual hope was expressed regarding obtaining EAA membership.

EAA VISION STATEMENT AND WEBSITE

The new EAA website was presented in Vienna by Margit. Members provided input on structure, branding consistency, social media elements, member logos, illustrations and technical points.

The design and content proposal was unanimously approved and the subgroup members agreed that this new website gave a better and more professional representation of the EAA.

*Furthermore, our new slogan has
been adopted and ratified:
The Voice of European Anglers.*

8. Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC)

As a BSAC member, the EAA achieved the following during 2025–26: The EAA currently holds the position of vice-chair of the BSAC. This has increased the general profile of recreational fishing among both the commercial and recreational sectors within the Baltic Sea, as well as with the Commission.

DURING 2025, THE EAA AND EAA/DAFV REPRESENTATIVES ...

- ... participated in the creation of the BSAC's annual position on TACs and quotas.
- ... been an advisory board member of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) via the BSAC vice-chair role. This has meant regular direct meetings with EFCA's control experts for the Baltic Sea, providing a platform to raise awareness of IUU fishing in the Baltic and influence future EFCA Joint Deployment Plans. This is a unique opportunity to share information that we should cultivate further.
- ... attended the annual meeting between the EU Commissioner and the BSAC leadership, which precedes the Council of Ministers' TAC and quota decision for 2026.



- ... created unique lobbying opportunities at the BALTFISH Forum. This has enabled us to campaign for the continuation of salmon trolling in the Baltic Sea.
- ... provided input into the Lövin MEP INI report on the Baltic MAP, including a direct meeting between her and the BSAC chair and vice-chair. Participated in the Wiesner roundtable meeting on the INI report.
- ... had monthly meetings with the BALTFISH regionalisation organisation chair.
- ... input into all BSAC recommendations, including the derogation from the discard ban for salmon fishing, and the seal and cormorant position paper.

Glenn Douglas furthermore held the position of chair of the BSAC Science Focus Group.

THIS HAS RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING ...

- I. Created a BSAC recommendation for in-year revision of fishing quotas. This was a key focus, as the recommendation advises against in-year revisions, such as the attempts to increase the herring quota in the Bothnian Sea and Bothnian Bay (SD 30–31), which lie outside the normal TAC and quota decision-making process.
- II. Created a BSAC recommendation concerning the preservation of the WFD in its current form.
- III. Drafted a rebuilding advice recommendation for Baltic fish stocks agreed upon by all BSAC members. This work was carried out at the request of both Commissioner Kadis and the ICES ACOM chair and is greatly appreciated by the DG Mare team.

9. European Parliament Representation

Throughout 2025, EAA maintained a strong presence in the European Parliament (EP), ensuring that the interests of recreational fishers were represented across the main EU policy discussions affecting the sector. This work was carried out by Aliénor, the Brussels-based consultancy responsible for EAA's European Parliament representation since 2014.

Advocacy focused throughout the year on the Baltic Fisheries Multi-Annual Plan, the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Water Resilience Initiative, the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), as well as cormorant management.

Monitoring of parliamentary activities remained central to the work. Position papers, briefing notes, amendment proposals and voting recommendations were regularly shared with Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) ahead of committee meetings and key legislative milestones.

On behalf of EAA, Aliénor also followed the monthly meetings of the Fisheries Committee (PECH) and relevant meetings of the Committee on the Environment (ENVI), maintaining regular contact with MEPs, parliamentary advisers and Parliament staff.

The RecFishing Forum continued to serve as EAA's main platform for dialogue with the European Parliament.

Two policy events were organised during the year. In April 2025, discussions focused on the place of recreational fisheries in the future European Oceans Pact and the evaluation of the CFP.

In November 2025, a conference dedicated to Baltic salmon conservation brought together MEPs, European Commission representatives and stakeholders to discuss the management of Baltic salmon stocks and the need to protect their spawning rivers.

The year also saw several important policy achievements. Following sustained engagement by EAA, the PECH Coordinators agreed to commission an updated study on the socio-economic value of recreational fisheries, extending its scope to cover both marine and freshwater recreational fisheries.



Several EAA priorities were also reflected in Parliament's work on the Baltic Fisheries Multi-Annual Plan, including stronger recognition of recreational fisheries, additional measures for wild salmon conservation and renewed calls for an EU cormorant management plan.

Throughout the year, EAA also contributed to parliamentary initiatives through briefing material, written questions and open letters signed by MEPs.

Communication activities continued to support advocacy efforts. Two editions of the Blue & Green Newsletter reached around 830 EU decision-makers and stakeholders, while the RecFishing Forum launched its LinkedIn page, publishing 31 posts and generating more than 10.000 impressions during its first months online.

Together, these activities strengthened EAA's visibility, credibility and influence within the European Parliament and across the wider EU policy community, ensuring that recreational fisheries remained firmly represented in European policy-making.



10. EAA Travel Support

JOINT FSBI/IFM CONFERENCE 2025

The first joint conference of the Fisheries Society of the British Isles (FSBI) and the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM), hosted by Queen's University Belfast with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), July 7–11, 2025. Theme: “fisheries management in a changing world”.

PURPOSE

Funding from the EAA enabled the Angling Trust to attend a leading UK and international fisheries science meeting and represent the recreational angling perspective in a forum otherwise dominated by academic and commercial-management science.

The conference's aim of strengthening links between scientists, stakeholders and policymakers aligns closely with the EAA's work to embed recreational interests in fisheries management and conservation.

SESSIONS ATTENDED SPANNED SEVERAL THEMES CENTRAL TO RECREATIONAL FISHERIES:

- Catch-and-release and post-release survival, including the English CHART catch-and-release tagging fishery for Atlantic bluefin tuna and work monitoring recreational catches – directly relevant to the recreational bluefin fishery and post-release survival priorities.
- Bluefin tuna and highly migratory species: Irish bluefin spatial ecology and reflections on the ecosystem approach within regional fisheries management organisations, relevant to ICCAT engagement.

- Sharks, skates and rays: distribution and movement of British Isles sharks, tope population structure and elasmobranch bycatch, of direct interest to recreational sea anglers.
- Sea bass and stock structure: sea bass life history and Celtic Sea cod connectivity, informing UK Fisheries Management Plan work.
- Governance and recognition: keynotes and talks on equity, legitimacy and a more just future for fisheries, reinforcing the case for recreational sector recognition.
- Diadromous fish, river connectivity and monitoring: salmon and sea trout survival, barriers and fish passage, and eDNA and data-quality methods relevant to recreational catch data.

VALUE

Attendance strengthened the EAA and the Trust's relationships across the fisheries science community, surfaced evidence and methods that will inform our marine and Fisheries Management Plan work, and raised the profile of recreational angling as a partner and data provider.

LOOKING AHEAD

As recreational fisheries are increasingly integrated into management frameworks and become the focus of dedicated research projects, the visibility of angling organisations at meetings like this is vital – both to represent anglers' interests directly and to ensure recreational evidence shapes the science.



I am grateful to the EAA for funding this attendance in 2025, and intend to attend the 2026 symposium at the University of Southampton (27th – 31st July), where the programme places strong emphasis on the science, management and policy interface.

FIRST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL EEL SYMPOSIUM, AMAMI ISLAND, JAPAN

The 1st Asian International Eel Symposium was held in 2025 on Amami Island in southern Japan and brought together almost 60 scientists from twelve countries. The meeting followed two successful European eel symposia and provided a platform for discussing the latest developments in eel biology, conservation, trade and management.

Particular attention was given to tropical and subtropical eel species and to the proposal submitted by the European Union and Honduras to include all *Anguilla* eel species in CITES Appendix II.

The DAFV participated with a presentation assessing the potential implications of a CITES Appendix II listing for all *Anguilla* species. The debate highlighted the complexity of balancing conservation objectives with economic interests.

Proponents argue that a comprehensive listing would improve transparency, traceability and sustainability in international eel trade. At present, the European eel is already listed in Appendix II, while other species remain subject to differing national and regional regulations.

A central challenge discussed during the symposium was the difficulty of identifying eel products in trade.

Juvenile eels (glass eels) and processed eel products often cannot be distinguished visually and frequently require DNA-based methods for reliable identification.

Participants noted that illegal and unreported trade continues to occur alongside legal supply chains, particularly in support of Asian aquaculture industries.

Views on the proposed CITES listing differed considerably. Representatives of government research institutions in China and Japan expressed skepticism, emphasizing the economic importance of eel aquaculture and existing regional management measures for Japanese eel stocks.

Other researchers, particularly from academic institutions in Japan and Taiwan, warned that available stock assessments indicate continuing declines in Japanese eel abundance and argued that stronger international coordination may be necessary.

Beyond policy issues, the symposium showcased a wide range of scientific research. The marbled eel (*Anguilla marmorata*), the most widely distributed tropical eel species, emerged as a major focus.

Its geographical range extends from East Africa across the Indo-Pacific to Fiji and southern Japan. Researchers presented new findings on ecology, feeding behaviour, migration, evolution and conservation.

Highlights included innovative X-ray studies demonstrating escape behaviour of glass eels from predators, non-lethal methods for analysing stomach contents, and reports of large glass eel populations in parts of Indonesia.

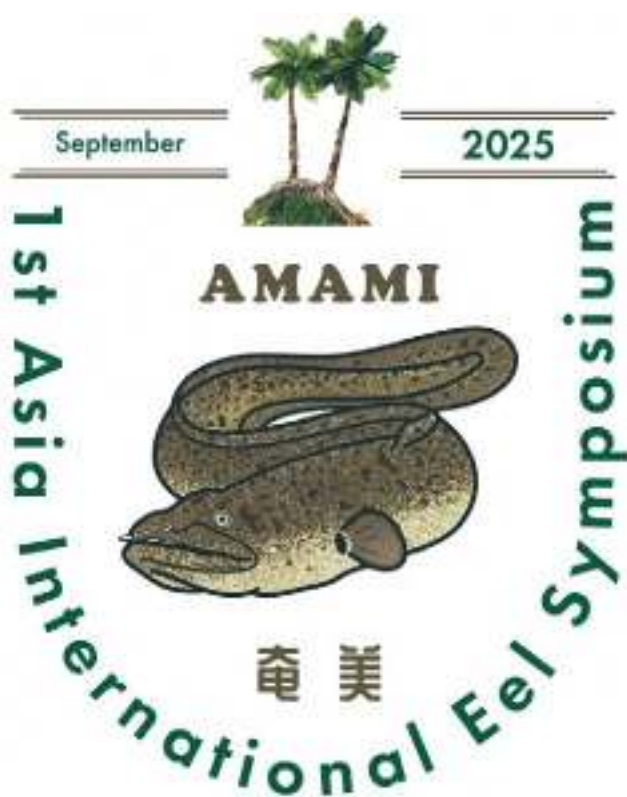


The programme was organized into five themes: river ecology, marine ecology, biogeography and evolution, conservation and applied ecology, and trade, management and conservation policy. Of the 30 presentations, a significant proportion focused on traceability challenges, international trade and the conservation implications of future CITES decisions.

The symposium concluded with field excursions on Amami Island, including electrofishing surveys that successfully captured several *Anguilla marmorata* spe-

cimens. Overall, the event demonstrated the growing importance of international collaboration in addressing conservation, management and trade challenges affecting eel species worldwide.

A more extensive report including literature references can be found [here!](#)



POLLACK BENCHMARK WORKSHOP (WKBSS3), COPENHAGEN

With funding from the European Anglers Alliance, the Angling Trust attended the ICES benchmark workshop WKBSS3 in Copenhagen, which reassessed the pollack stock in ICES areas 6 and 7. The workshop was a significant milestone for recreational fisheries, marking the first time that recreational catch data has been incorporated into the pollack stock assessment.

KEY OUTCOMES

The pollack stock has collapsed and is expected to take several years to recover. The 2026 assessment (published June 2025) incorporated recreational data for the first time, drawn from diary programmes and surveys covering French, Irish and UK anglers.

Both retained and released fish were included, with a best estimate of 26 % post-release mortality (lower estimate 19.4 %, upper 41.2 %). Smaller length classes were excluded on the assumption of high survival.

The benchmark moved away from the previous SPiCT assessment, which relied on just two indices (commercial landings and a restrictive trawl survey), to a Bayesian biomass model (BSS).

This allowed a wider range of the best-available information to be used as indices for the stock, including age-growth parameters, fecundity and LPUE. While the limitations of several indices were acknowledged, there was general agreement that the model is robust.

The current stock unit is considered too large given pollack's high site fidelity. Genetics and telemetry work is underway, with revisions to the stock unit planned for the next benchmark. A climate-driven regime shift in the English Channel and Celtic Sea — predicted some thirty years ago and also evident in other gadoids such as ling, cod and haddock — has likely contributed to the collapse and been exacerbated by overfishing. The ICES assessment model does not currently account for environmental variables.

The workshop pointed towards zero TAC advice for 2026 (to be confirmed). Because the assessment complies with the ICES Advice Rule, ICES will not provide rebuilding scenarios unless these are formally requested as a technical service.

On the presentation of recreational data, the decision was to follow the seabass approach: combining recreational and commercial mortality within a single TAC and assuming recreational mortality at current levels, rather than pre-empting pending decisions from fisheries managers. A dedicated pollack management tool, comparable to the seabass Catch Allocation Tool, could be developed in future.



11. Policy for Travel Expenses

- I. This policy applies to instances where we wish to reimburse staff from member organisations for representing the interests of the EAA at meetings. Furthermore, board members can be reimbursed for travel expenses when attending EAA board meetings, and the board can agree to reimburse other expenses they deem appropriate.
- II. The Chairs of the Sea and Freshwater Subgroups can approve reimbursement of travel expenses for paid staff members of EAA member organisations representing the interests of the EAA at meetings, as opposed to the primary national member interests, such as meetings with national MEPs. Each subgroup has an agreed annual budget of 10,000 EUR.
- III. Such expenses will only be agreed if no other organisation has been identified to provide such expenses.
- IV. Insurance cover for travel etc. should be provided by the EAA member organisation.
- V. case should be presented in writing to the Chair showing the benefits to the EAA for attending. This should be retained for audit purposes.
- VI. The case should include the following information for a decision to be made:
 - a) Name of the event
 - b) List the EAA objectives that this event meets detailing the information that we want to collect / convey in relation to those objectives
 - c) List key organisations / participants that are attending to highlight risk / benefit of engaging with these organisations
 - d) List the key decision makers present that we wish to engage with either now or in the future, providing contact details
 - e) Projected cost to EAA
 - f) Detail the benefits to EAA in attending the meeting
- VII. All expense claims should be made within 1 month of expenditure and need to be accompanied by receipts to enable payment.



12. Finances

The table below summarizes income, spending budget and result of the European Anglers Alliance for the year 2025.

ITEM	INCOME	SPENDING BUDGET	RESULT
<i>Member fees</i>	231.750 €	*	
Other	0 €		
Office rent / service and other costs		18.000 €	16.206 €
Conferences, meetings and travel costs:			
° Subgroups member travel costs		20.000 €	2.651 €
° Other		20.000 €	11.150 €
° Directors travel costs		0 €	9.728 €
° Travel and catering costs Recfish fora		0 €	2.547 €
Bank charges		1.500 €	957 €
PR & Communication		0 €	3.425 €
Website Kreativdenker		0 €	15.289 €
External audit		4.500 €	8.134 €
Secretary services and external contractors		138.000 €	151.365 €
Membership to 4 advisory councils		5.400 €	2.350 €
Migratory species (incl. NASCO)		1.000 €	0 €
Migration EAA		20.000 €	0 €
Total costs		228.400 €	223.802 €
Year subscriptions*		231.750 €	237.000 €
Total income*		231.750 €	237.000 €
Unforeseen costs		10.000 €	1.708 €
Operating result		-6.650 €	11.490 €
Unforeseen costs		10.000 €	1.708 €
Operating result		-6.650 €	11.490 €
*excluding the Angling Council of Ireland fee, not yet accounted for during the ,25 budgeting process			

Please note that the detailed breakdown in the table contains more information than specified in the official financial accounts report. We expect this more detailed breakdown to be integrated in the financial accounts' report for 2026 and hereon after.

Additional remarks

- The membership fees of our new member Angling Council of Ireland were not yet included in the 2025 budget – a plus of 5,150 €.
- Migration of the EAA organization from Offenbach am Main, Germany to Brussels, Belgium encountered serious process delays in 2025. Only a modest part of the budgeted amount of 20,000 € was subsequently expended.
- C. Originally budgeted for 2024, work on the new EAA website has expanded well into 2025, incurring costs that were largely not accounted for in the budget.
- At the November meeting in Berlin, the board decided to hire Margit Bogler to carry out a variety of tasks:
 - secretary and organizational support to the board (among others a prominent role in the outreach to new members such as the French FNPF)
 - drafting minutes for all EAA meetings
 - managing the new EAA website project* and being liaison for the project contractor. Alienor website services cover the regular publication of EAA news articles, positions and events, not the realization of the new website.Margit has been working for our sister organization EFTTA for a long time and has ample experience in our work fields.
- Directors travel costs were spent among others on business trips to potential new members (most notably France) and the board participating in the annual EFTTA Angling Summit in Berlin, while holding EAA board meetings and joint EAA/EFTTA meetings.
- The substantial extra costs mentioned in the first financial paragraph, such as the new website development costs and the hiring of M Bogler were offset by the member fees from the Angling Council of Ireland, underspending on the Brussels migration, budgeted unforeseen costs and finally the lower than budgeted overall costs for conferences, meetings and travel. This has produced a surplus instead of the projected slight deficit.

Statement of profit and loss and audit declaration

From our financial report (see QR code on the next page) the statement of profit and loss pictured below underlines the continued healthy financial position of the EAA. As in 2024, our reserves have grown in 2025, with a net result of 11,490 € to a balance position of 217,846 € end of year.

For organizations such as the EAA a minimum reserve of half the annual budget is considered healthy. Like in previous years we achieved this prerequisite in 2025.

Statement of profit and loss 2025

European Anglers Alliance
OFFENBACH AM MAIN

Statement of profit and loss 2025

	2025	2024
	EUR	EUR
Year Contribution	237,000	225,250
Total revenues	237,000	225,250
Office expenses	16,206	14,263
Secretary general	151,365	134,068
General costs	53,881	48,866
RAC fee	2,350	1,350
Other expenses	1,708	21,445
Total expenses	225,510	219,992
Result for the year	11,490	7,258

Please note that the item 'Secretary general' covers the sum of all recurring external staff hirings: Secretary General Jan Kappel, Alienor and Secretary to the board Margit Bogler.

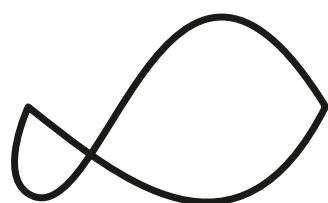
Audit declaration

'In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of European Anglers Alliance as at 31 December and of its result for 2025 in accordance with the accounting policies selected and disclosed by the association, as set out in note to the internal financial statements.'

The full report can be found [here!](#)

Financial guidance for 2026

The EAA board seeks to grow its membership with formally acknowledged national angling bodies that share our vision and goals. The EAA in the future would ideally represent all EU countries, while remaining open to membership for non-EU countries in the European influence sphere, such as current members Angling Trust, the Norges Jeger- og Fiskerforbund and Fédération Suisse de pêche sportive en mer.



eea

The Voice of
European Anglers