

Update from Jan Kappel

Campaign – Small hydropower stations

EFTTA together with the EAA have produced a 26 minutes film about the negative effects from small hydropower stations. Next step is to launch a campaign on the internet.

There is an immense political pressure for more of these river devastating and fish killing installations to be placed in our rivers. The industry itself argues that there is a potential for 50% more installations compared to today. EFTTA defies that. The negative impact from such an expansion is being totally overlooked.

What Europe needs is less of these damaging installations and that the existing ones become much more fish and environmentally friendly. EFTTA and EAA are financing this campaign. Additional contributions from EFTTA members or companies with a passion to help stop this are most welcome. Additional funding will help us to create a more visible campaign and influence the decision-makers.

“Hugh’s Fish Fight”

EFTTA is a supporter of the “Hugh’s Fish Fight” campaign against discards. You will find the EFTTA text and logo under the supporters on the www.fishfight.net website.

The Commission has proposed a discard ban to be phased in over some years. The discard ban is part of the on-going reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which is up for revision every ten years. France, Spain and some other EU Member States are opposed to a discard ban attempting to have it watered down. So far they have succeeded in the Commission now saying that the ban will be introduced fishery by fishery and not species by species. Angling interests could be hampered by this ban. The ban is accompanied by a “catch and land everything” clause, which could see more of certain fish species of angling interest caught and landed no matter the size of them e.g. sea bass. Also, the mortality rate from anglers’ releases now is under scrutiny by fisheries scientists. I am attending a scientific meeting in May discussing these and other issues.

Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy 2009 – 2013

The Commission published its proposal for a CFP reform in July last year. Now the European Parliament is amending it. EFTTA is lobbying to avert all negative impact on recreational angling and pro-actively lobbying for more recognition for recreational angling, better representation on advisory bodies, more socio-economic data and access to the billion euro fisheries fund to benefit our industry.

Cormorants

As you know in December 2008 the European Parliament adopted the “Kindermann” report on a *European cormorant management plan to minimise the increasing impact of cormorants on fish stocks, fishing and aquaculture*. EFTTA and EAA were the main providers of factual data in that report. One positive outcome of the Kindermann report is the EU funded CorMan project running from 2011-14, which established a technical platform for exchange of cormorant information across the EU including a website intended to serve as a focal point for all interested in the cormorant issues:

www.ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/cormorants/home_en.htm

This spring EFTTA will give input to a final consultation round on a guidance document with regard to derogation provisions of the Birds Directive in relation to Cormorants. It addresses issues such as “serious damage” and indicates what actions would be acceptable and compatible with the Birds Directive. Though this is “only” guidance, or interpretation, of the legal text it is a most important piece of paper as it will be used by the EU Member States to direct their national legislation.

A pan-European cormorant summer count is taking place this year. January 2013 another winter count is scheduled. In August last year EFTTA together with EAA ran a very well attended cormorant event at the World Recreational Fisheries Conference in Berlin www.worldrecfish.org

Lead

A list of toxic substances under the Water Framework Directive is under revision. It was proposed to have lead included in the substances to be banned and phased out. EFTTA delivered a response to the Commission in a bid to secure the continued use of lead in fishing tackle. The final proposal from the Commission is in line with EFTTA’s advice. The European Parliament is now dealing with the proposal.

Another attempt to ban all lead tackle is coming from AEWA, Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds. A first draft for a resolution sought to ban all lead tackle in wetlands. EFTTA lobbied this and now the draft “only” suggests the banning of some of the smaller sizes of lead fishing weights, between 0.06 grams and 28.35 grams. In angling terms this means lead shots from size 14 to size 8 and lead weights of over 1 ounce would still be allowed. This proposal is equal to the UK law.

The text is to be discussed and eventually adopted in May. Denmark is very supportive, which is no surprise as Denmark has a lead ban in place already. A number of other countries find – in line with EFTTA – that the proposal lacks justification and scientific backing.

Invasive alien species

The angling community are terrified about invasive alien species. Invasive alien species can be a threat to whole ecosystems. A paper from the EU Commission had pointed out fish farmers and anglers as the main culprits for invasive alien species in our freshwater systems. This is utterly wrong in most cases and has been communicated to the EU. The Commission is working on a legislative proposal, a Directive most likely, to be presented this autumn. EFTTA follows the development.

Baltic Salmon

The Commission published a proposal for a Baltic salmon management plan in August last year. The plan excellently addresses some of the problem issues but fails on others. For example it is proposed to phase out stocking without addressing the core problem: the blocked waterways due to hydropower and barrages. EFTTA has lobbied the proposal in the drafting phase and continues to lobby the European Parliament where the proposal is now pending to be adopted in early July. One of the EFTTA core targets is to see an end to mixed stock salmon fisheries at sea, which is a threat to the weakest salmon stocks. This issue is not addressed by the proposal and it will be an uphill battle to get the Parliament to address the issue effectively as the commercial fisheries interests lobby against.

EFTTA and EAA’s extensive position paper and amendments from the 12th January 2012 to the Baltic salmon management plan are available for download here:

<http://www.eaa-europe.eu/index.php?id=22>

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