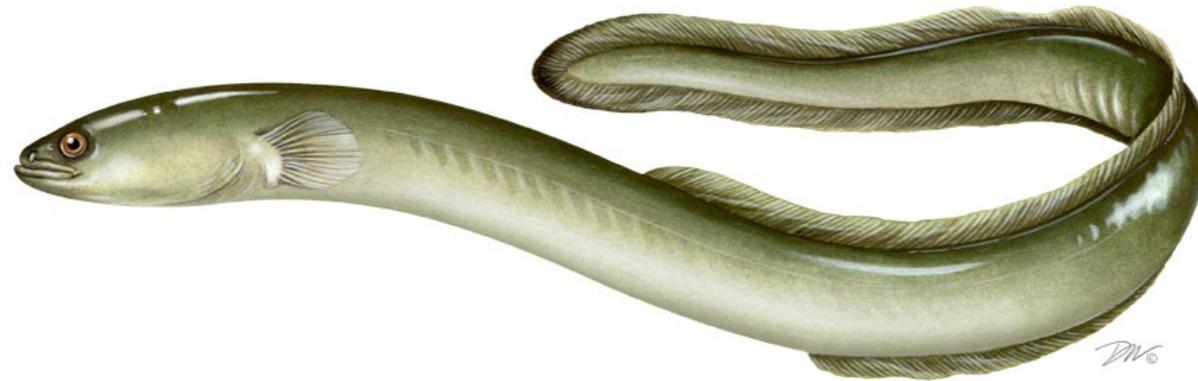


# American Eel Technical Committee Report on Board Tasks



February 3, 2026

- Board Tasks:

1. Review Addendum V criteria for site selection for aquaculture harvest to determine if changes to the language or interpretation of these criteria should be considered
2. Evaluate the utility of continuing the Florida glass eel survey and its contribution to the Commission's management and assessment of the American eel stock
  - To inform the Board in considering exempting Florida from the glass eel survey compliance requirement

- TC met twice to address Board tasks
  - December 15, 2025
  - January 6, 2026
- TC also discussed sampling changes for Virginia's YOY survey at Gardy's Millpond



# Task 1: Aquaculture Harvest Site Criteria

- Addendum V language related to the selection of sites for aquaculture harvest:

### **3.2 Glass Eel Aquaculture Plan Provisions**

The Aquaculture Plan proposal requirements have been modified based on the following criteria (as recommended by the TC):

States and jurisdictions may develop a Plan for aquaculture purposes. Under an approved Aquaculture Plan, states and jurisdictions may harvest a maximum of 200 pounds of glass eels annually from within their waters for use in domestic aquaculture facilities. Site selection for harvest will be an important consideration for applicants and reviewers. Suitable harvest locations will be evaluated with a preference to locations that have:

1. Established or proposed glass eel monitoring;
2. Are favorable to law enforcement; and
3. Watershed characteristics that are prone to relatively high mortality rates.

# Aquaculture Site Selection Criteria

- Addendum V language related to the selection of sites for aquaculture harvest:

Watersheds known to have features (ex. impassible dams, limited area of upstream habitat, limited water quality of upstream habitat, and hydropower mortality) that would be expected to cause lower eel productivity and/or higher glass eel mortality will be preferred targets for glass eel harvest. This is not an exclusive requirement, because there will be coastal regions with interest in eel aquaculture where preferred watershed features do not occur or are not easily demonstrated. In all cases, the applicant should demonstrate the above three interests were prioritized and considered.

- TC does not recommend any changes to the FMP provisions for Aquaculture Plans
- TC provided guidance for interpreting the site selection criteria:
  1. Consideration of glass eel monitoring efforts in site selection may vary depending on whether a proposed site also has commercial glass eel harvest
  2. Watershed characteristics prone to relatively high mortality or that otherwise make the watershed unlikely to produce large numbers of adult eels could also include steep gradients, multiple dams, or a small drainage area
  3. Aquaculture proposals should describe how criteria were considered and prioritized
  4. Intent of Addendum V language was not that all three criteria must be met, but will be considered and used to inform TC recommendations



# Task 2: Florida YOY Survey

- **Summary of issue:**

- Single YOY survey site at Guana River Dam, no viable alternatives
- Persistent low/zero catches
  - Other monitoring trends do not agree with recruitment failure
- High cost per sample, FWC prioritizing other monitoring

# TC Discussion on FL YOY Survey

- **NOTE:** Task is not complete. Pending discussion with SAS.
- TC discussion points:
  - Concern about losing the southernmost YOY site
  - Concern about discontinuing survey without gaining new source of information on recruitment
    - Possibility of using FL electrofishing and age data
  - FL YOY survey performed well in assessment power analysis
  - Should use the assessment criteria for accepting fishery independent data sets to evaluate YOY survey
  - Noted YOY surveys currently used to understand local recruitment trends; not currently used for management

# TC Discussion on FL YOY Survey

- **Next Steps:**
- Gather input from the SAS, including
  - Utility of the FL YOY survey in terms of variability and power, and in comparison to other surveys
  - Impacts of not having the FL YOY survey data for future assessments
  - Why FL electrofishing and age data were not used in assessment
  - Potential for using electrofishing and age data in the future to assess recruitment; what could be done to improve the survey for eel assessment use
- Analyze the YOY time series to calculate the proportion of zero catches of American eels



# VA YOY Monitoring

# YOY Monitoring: Gardy's Millpond

- Dam Breach at Gardy's Millpond YOY survey site in VA, creating two entry points for glass eels
- VA asked TC for guidance on how to proceed
  - TC members suggested looking for correlations of new two-entry site dynamics with historical data.
  - It was also suggested to install eel ramps below both "spillways"
  - Consensus to maintain data stream at this site, but make note of changes to the system and potential survey impacts

# Questions?

