Marine Biodiversity
Conservation Center
AQUARIUM BOKA

AdriBioPro2019

International Conference:
Adriatic Biodiversity Protection

7-10 April
Kotor
Montenegro

Book of Abstracts



INSTITUT ZA BIOLOGIJU MORA

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Univerzitet Crne Gore

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Presentation title

European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) in Skadar Lake

Abstract

European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) is highly endangered fish species due to several factors: overfishing of glass eel, yellows and silvers; swimming bladder parasite which originate from *Anguilla japonica*; habitat loss; riverine connectivity loss. It is still not clear whether some of those factors are curtail or it is synergetic effect of all of them. It is also possible that dramatic decrease of eel abundance is related to some climate changes in Atlantic Ocean (The North Atlantic Oscillation – NOA) which caused cyclic changes in main Gulf current which is essential for dispersal of eel larvae.

European eel inhabits the whole water mass of Skadar Lake, from its shoreline to its central part, form the small coastal springs to the depts of sublacustric wells called „oka". Desk research of European eel in Skadar Lake suggests several measures: (a) Setting up monitoring program, together with Albanian partners, of glass eel immigration and sliver eel emigration from Lake Skadar and estimation the eel biomass in the Skadar Lake; (b) Development the joint (Albania and Montenegro) Eel Management Plan for the Lake Skadar; (c) Regulation and control of harvesting of fish trap on Bojana river in Albania during downstream eel migration, in order to regulate downstream migration of silver eels and to satisfy requirements of "eel directive"; (d) Develop eel farming and using of glass eels and elevers from Bojana delta as fish farm stocking material, in order to reduce fishing pressure on eel live stock in the Skadar Lake.

Based on the importance of the Skadar Lake as huge eel habitat, eel vulnerability, global threats, biological importance, marketing potential and eel unique and mysterious life cycle as well as unique body shape, authors strongly suggest to proclaim European eel, together with pelican, as a flagship species for the Skadar Lake. As initial activity authors suggest European eel as a flagship species for the Lake Skadar Aquarium, as part of Visitors Center "Vranjina".

International Conference Adriatic Biodiversity Protection – AdriBioPro2019, 7-10 April 2019, Kotor, Montenegro, Book of Abstracts

Publisher: Institute of Marine Biology, University of Montenegro
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For the Publisher: Dr. Mirko Đurović, Director
Technical Editor: Zdravko Ikica

Image on the cover: Institute of Marine Biology
(Photo: University of Montenegro)
Printed by: DPC d.o.o. Podgorica
Print: 150 copies

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For bibliographic purposes, this publication should be cited as follows:

International Conference Adriatic Biodiversity Protection – AdriBioPro2019, 7-10 April 2019, Kotor, Montenegro, Book of Abstracts. Institute of Marine Biology, University of Montenegro. 126 pp.

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