



### European eel

*Anguilla anguilla*

The listing of the European eel *Anguilla anguilla* on CITES Appendix II will take effect from March 2009.

Adult eels leave fresh water and migrate to the Sargasso Sea to breed. Their progeny return to European rivers as glass eels and then elvers. The population is considered to be 'outside safe biological limits'.

In the UK the eel is fished commercially. Young eels are mainly caught for export to east Asia, where they are farmed for food. From March 2009 trade in eels will be subject to export permits and before a permit is issued a non-detriment finding will have to be made.

CITES listing coincides with the adoption by the European Community of an Action Plan for the species and JNCC is currently involved in efforts to dovetail the workings of the two measures.



© Reinhard Dirscherla/FLPA



## > Global nature conservation advice

# 1

### JNCC provides authoritative, science-based advice on global nature conservation issues and plays a key role in international agreements and conventions

A number of multilateral conventions and agreements govern nature conservation or have an indirect influence on nature conservation. Whilst there are a number of agreements at a global level, there is a growing number at a regional or taxon-specific level – see the web links at the end of this section for further information.

The UK is a party to several of these agreements and JNCC provides technical advice to the Government at relevant international conferences and meetings. In addition, we advise Government and the UK conservation bodies on the implications of international agreements for nature conservation within national borders, including the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) was held in June 2007 at The Hague. CITES is one of

the main agreements concerned with global biodiversity conservation. The UK – one of more than 150 governments present – was represented by a delegation led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and advised by JNCC's Vin Fleming and Alison Littlewood. A key outcome was the agreement of a new strategic vision for CITES that includes three strategic goals:

- to ensure compliance with, and implementation and enforcement of, the Convention;
- to secure the resources and means for the operation and implementation of the Convention;
- to contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by ensuring that CITES and other multilateral instruments and processes work in a coherent and supportive way.



#### Red kite

*Milvus milvus*

Many birds of prey migrate across long distances, including species such as red kite *Milvus milvus*, lesser kestrel *Falco naumanni* and saker falcon *Falco cherrug*. In Europe an analysis of population trends has shown that a third of species are declining rapidly – at a rate of one per cent or more of population per year. They face a wide range of threats, including habitat loss, persecution by shooting and poisoning, and inadequate protection at 'bottleneck sites' (points along migration flyways at which birds congregate). The preparation of an action plan under the Convention on Migratory Species will help to address these threats.



© Dreamstime





### Grand Cayman parrot

*Amazona leucocephala caymanensis*

JNCC plays a role in capacity-building in the Overseas Territories. One example of this work during the year saw JNCC's Nichola Burnett taking part in workshops in the Cayman Islands for Caymans' government personnel who will be involved in enforcing new law relating to trade in endangered species. The islands are home to a number of CITES-listed species, such as the Grand Cayman parrot *Amazona leucocephala caymanensis*.



### Inset: CITES Training in the Overseas Territories

Pictured (from left) are Samuel Rose, of the Cayman Islands' Ministry of the Environment; Nichola Burnett, JNCC; Gina Ebanks-Petrie, Director, Department of Environment; John Hounslow, CITES Management Authority, Animal Health; and Charles MacKay, HM Revenue & Customs.



Grand Cayman parrot image © Mark Orr



The Hague conference also approved a pan-African compromise on elephants and ivory, which will allow southern African countries to sell stockpiled ivory, and the listing on Appendix 1 of most sawfish *pristidae*, thus restricting commercial trade in wild specimens.

A significant development for the UK saw the European eel *Anguilla anguilla* added to the agreement's Appendix II, which regulates trade to avoid detriment to wild populations. This listing means that the UK and JNCC will have to deal with the export of specimens taken from the wild, reversing our usual role of dealing with imports.

Away from The Hague, JNCC was busy with CITES-related work. We act as the UK's Scientific Authority for animals for CITES (The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, undertakes the complementary role for plants) and in this role we provide advice to Defra on applications for permission to import, export or use species listed under European Community CITES regulations.

A key part of this process involves JNCC making 'non-detriment findings' on imports of individual species – an assessment of whether or not imports of specimens will threaten that species' survival. During the year we advised on a total of 20,238 consultations on licenses.

Other CITES work included compiling a checklist of corals found in Fiji and surrounding islands to better inform decisions about exports, and involvement in the group that sets priorities for the National Wildlife Crime Unit (see section 6, page 32).

Under the auspices of the *Convention on Migratory Species* (CMS), JNCC's David Stroud continued to make a major contribution to the work of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) technical committee. The main focus has been to respond to the threat of avian influenza and to undertake preparatory work for the 4th Meeting of the Parties in Madagascar in September 2008.

JNCC's Tom Blasdale was a member of the UK group that attended a meeting in December 2007 in the Seychelles that concluded that an international CMS agreement on migratory sharks should be pursued.

JNCC also made a significant contribution, with the UK conservation bodies, to a meeting at Loch Lomond in October 2007 to look at options for international co-operation to improve protection for African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey. The meeting was co-hosted by the UK and the United Arab Emirates, and involved the participation of 60 countries. Substantial progress was made towards the conclusion of a non-binding memorandum of understanding and an action plan.

Work on the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) is detailed in section 2 (see page 18).

We were involved in preparations for the 9th Conference of the Parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) at Bonn in May 2008, notably through participation in the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. We also provided input to a Chinese plant conservation strategy, which was launched in June 2007 as a contribution to the CBD's Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

David Stroud also continued to make an input to the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Convention) Scientific and Technical Review Panel and participated in a workshop at Changwon, Korea, in November 2007 on wetlands and human health. David played a key role in preparing papers for the 10th Conference of the Parties in Korea in October/November 2008, and on issues surrounding avian influenza.

#### > Main convention websites

Convention on Biological Diversity  
[www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species  
[www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

Convention on Migratory Species  
[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance  
[www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org)