

## **MINUTES**

**of the MEETING of the  
NORTH AND WEST DISTRICT  
SALMON FISHERY BOARD  
held on Tuesday 22nd October 2014  
at 1.30pm at Reay House, 17 Old  
Edinburgh Road, INVERNESS**

### **Present:**

Mr R Vestey (Convener)  
Mr D Davies  
Mr J Allingham  
Mr R Bradford  
Mr C Marsham  
Ms C Acheson

Mr A Balfour

### **In attendance:**

Mr C Cook (Clerk, Bell Ingram)

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from; Mr C MacLeod, Mr J Watson, Mr D Lindsay, Mr G Osborne, Dr S Marshall (WSFT)

#### **2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Marsham declared an interest for Items 6 and 8 of the agenda in his role as Chairman of the WSFT.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th MAY 2014**

There being no comments the Convenor signed the Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

Members discussed with disappointment that the Grosvenor Estate agent had only in the last couple of weeks instructed consultation with the downstream proprietors that could be affected by the hydro schemes planned by the estate within the Strathmore/Hope system. Clare Acheson said that the owners of the Hope Estate had no concerns about the development.

#### **5. FINANCIAL REPORT**

A financial report was tabled. The Clerk advised that the Assessment arrears and outstanding insurance recovery had been settled.

## **6. WEST SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST - REPORT**

Charles Marsham talked to the following report covering the work undertaken so far by the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust in line with the funding proposal approved by the Board for 2014/5

### **Report to North & West District Salmon Fishery Board Work undertaken between 1<sup>st</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014**

This report covers the work undertaken by the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust in line with the funding proposal approved by the District Fishery Board for 2014/15.

The following work has been undertaken:

1. Juvenile surveys. 12 catchments were sampled. These were: Gleann Leireag, Sandwood, Achriesgill, Loch Innis, Badna Bay, Oldshoremore, Culag, Kirkaig, Garvie, Polly, Loch nam Brac and Rhiconich. The production of reports on this work will be completed in the new year and circulated to proprietors, with a general report also produced, supplied to the Board and available on the Trust website.
2. Broodstock Netting - this is yet to start but will be undertaken in November and early December together with the Estates, if requested.
3. Education – the Ghillies seminar will take place in April 2015.

The school projects were very well received by all attending. We undertook 2 workshops and 2 field trips, covering 5 of the 6 primary schools giving the children a good oversight of the environment, its organisms and potential threats. Unfortunately Achiltibuie Primary School turned down the offer of attendance at the events.

We also carried out a rockpool survey with the P1 – P4 from Scourie Primary School, with the results submitted to the National Database.

Scourie Detectives went well, with a mix of demonstrations and guided walks. All who attended appeared to enjoy themselves and learn about the Scourie area.

4. Sweep netting surveys were undertaken within the Laxford and Polla where possible. A number of fish were caught and tagged, and lice and predator damage recorded. In addition sampling was undertaken in the Kyle of Durness during May and June. There were 38 recaptures during 2014, many from the Badna Bay smolt trap. The full report will be completed in the new year, supplied to the Board and published on the Trust website.
5. Biosecurity. The Trust was again involved in the pulling of Himalayan Balsam at Nedd and Clashnessie. The population in both areas has been significantly reduced, although still present in small numbers.

The Trust continues to manage the Scottish Mink Initiative project within the area. Despite several sightings, no physical signs have been found in traps or rafts.

6. A smolt trap was installed in Badna Bay during April and May. This worked well, with a number of salmon and sea trout smolts trapped. Many of the sea trout were tagged to provide additional information to the sweep netting survey.
7. The Trust has worked with the Clerk to the Board as required, providing advice on different matters, including planning applications.

Dr Shona Marshall, Fisheries Biologist

## 7. ASSOCIATION OF SALMON FISHERY BOARDS - REPORT

Members considered and discussed the report supplied by Mr Allingham and expressed their thanks to him for producing it: He explained that the report deals with notes most relevant to us in the North West taken from the monthly ASFB newsletters which are circulated to Members by the Clerk.

1. March.

A new review by RAFTS concludes that the use of hatcheries on rivers is generally futile and may actually damage salmon populations.

2. April.

Report from the Deveron. Blackfaced sheep are winning the battle against giant hogweed. Have we any hogweed in our area.

3. June.

A salmon farm in Norway was finally identified as the source of an escape of farmed salmon – by DNA testing.

4. Research by scientists in Oslo and also British Columbia has found that Atlantic Salmon show capacity to adapt to warmer waters

5. Chinese Mitten Crabs,

There was an article in the Scotsman of 14<sup>th</sup> September that a female Chinese Mitten crab had been found in the River Clyde at Dalmarnock. This seemed to cause quite a panic as mitten crabs are regarded as a dangerous, invasive species which can eat salmon and trout eggs.

However, further reading reveals that mitten crabs were introduced into Germany in 1913 and have since spread throughout northern Europe. They were found in the Thames in 1935 and are now well established there as well as in the Madway, Humber, Ouse, Tyne and Warfe.

They spend most of their lives in fresh water, migrate into salt water to breed and can travel over land.

Clearly this is not a species we want to see in the North rivers though it does not seem to eradicate trout or salmon where it does exist.

6. The Chairman and Board of Inland Fisheries Ireland has recently welcomed a definitive review of some 300 scientific publications on the effect of sea lice on wild stocks of salmon and sea trout which concludes that sea lice have negatively impacted wild stocks in salmon farming areas in Ireland, Scotland and Norway. **BIG DEAL**. We have known this for about **THIRTY YEARS** but will the Scottish Government now admit it.

J.D.ALLINGHAM

7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## **8. WILD FISHERY REVIEW**

The Clerk highlighted the key recommendations of the Wild Fishery Review which had been completed and the report submitted to Scottish Ministers. Members engaged in a wide ranging discussion about what the consequences of legislative change along the lines of the recommendation might mean.

In response to the possibility that Boards would be replaced in the local management of fisheries by Fishery Management Organisations with Charitable Status and given that it is not known at this present time how many FMO's there will be or what their geographical reach will be or how their size or extent will be determined and further more given that it is unknown how the outcome of the changes might affect the WSFT, Members agreed that an interim position was needed. It was agreed that the NWDSFB and WSFT through initial discussion between their respective chairmen should develop a more closely integrated approach to their operations. One possibility discussed was that the next Board meeting might be actually be a joint WSFT/NWDSFB meeting.

Further discussion on the uncertainty about how the size or extent will be determined but acknowledging the likelihood that there will be fewer FMO's than there are Salmon Fishery Districts concluded that early discussion with neighbouring Boards should take place. The aim would be to understand their thoughts, assuming any influence of the process was possible, on combining to form a future FMO. Members concluded there were two likely options; combining with the WRDSFB to form a large west coast FMO or with the KoSDSFB forming an FMO with west and east coast characteristics.

The Clerk was asked to produce a plan for circulation showing the boundaries of the three Boards but also to produce plans showing the distribution of SEPA area advisory groups on the basis that it was possible that alignment of FMO's with these entities could be favoured.

The Clerk told the Board that he happened to be meeting a Board member and the Director of the KoSDSFB in the coming weeks and was asked to open a conversation with them as outlined above.

The Clerk also mentioned that he would attend the ASFB AGM on Wednesday 5th November and would report back any further information relevant to this and other topics.

Members also discussed the possibility that as Salmon Fishery owners that they may end up with an FMO of an extent and managed in a way that they did not like. The Clerk said that it was worth remembering that at its most basic a Board is a committee of salmon fishery owners and that it was still possible for such a structure to continue. The ability for salmon fishery proprietors to continue to be able to meet and collaborate for the benefit of salmon or salmon fishery interests was not without merit. The North West Salmon Management Group existed for the express purpose of applying for and managing seal control licences but could potentially have a broader remit and would arguably be advisedly kept active even with an FMO in place as the means by which Salmon Proprietors secured the right to control seals.

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Davies updated Members on the perennial fungal problem on the River Polly downstream of the Marine Harvest Hatchery. He said the problem had been serious because of low water conditions and that SEPA had served a final warning letter on Marine Harvest which was a stronger hand than they have previously played.

Mr Davies also mentioned that water was regularly seen spilling out of vehicle mounted tanks when leaving the Marine Harvest smolt farm. He raised this as a bio security issue as the water from the tanks must end up ultimately back in burns and rivers. The Clerk said he would liaise with Mr Davies as he thought fit to bring the matter to the attention of SNH and SEPA.

## 12. DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

The date of the next Board meeting and the Annual Public meeting was set as Wednesday 20th May 2015 and to be held at the MacPhail Centre, Ullapool. The Annual Public meeting to start at 1.00pm with the Board meeting to follow on from it at about 1.30pm.

There being no other business there was a vote of thanks to the Convener and the meeting closed at 3.15pm

## ACTION PLAN

Attend ASFB AGM and report on Wild Fishery Review reaction	<b>CRWC</b>
Discuss possibility for closer integration with WSFT	<b>RV/CM/CRWC</b>
Prepare plans showing DSFB boundaries and SEPA AAG's for members	<b>CRWC</b>
Write to SNH & SEPA ref. the Marine Harvest Smolt transport	<b>CRWC/DD</b>
Organise May's meetings	<b>CRWC</b>