

# Fisheries Management Scotland

## Meeting minutes

19 June 2019



### Directors present

Richard Sankey (Chairman)

Alison Baker

Roger Brook

Douglas Dobie

Brian Doran

Lorraine Hawkins

Alasdair Laing

Peter Landale

David Summers

### In attendance

Alan Wells, Chief Executive

Brian Davidson, Director of Communications & Administration

### Apologies for absence

Chris Conroy

Mary Nicholson

Bill Whyte

### 1. Welcome and members interests

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, and in particular Alasdair Laing, who was elected to join the Board of Directors as a Trust representative. Members were invited to declare any updates to members' interests. Nothing was declared.

### 2. Actions arising from previous meeting

- *AW/BD to consider ideas for a memorial to Simon McKelvey* – it is proposed that a memorial talk/lecture be built into the 2020 and future annual Fisheries Management Scotland conferences. More widely, the Scottish Branch of IFM are considering supporting a bursary to support an apprenticeship at the University of Highlands & Islands, with a focus on riparian restoration.
- *AW/BD to organise ballot for director vacancy* – this was completed and the director vacancy was filled by Alasdair Laing.
- *AW/BD to plan 3-4 regional members' meetings* – This is underway. A meeting in Callander has been set for 23 August. Date options for other areas, including Caithness and Sutherland, have been circulated for meetings in July, August or September.
- *AW to provide MN with supporting documents for review of appraisal process etc* – this was completed.

- *BD to consider Police Scotland/COPFS in planning for bailiffs' seminar* – this is underway and was discussed with the new National Wildlife Crime Coordinator. A meeting to discuss this further, and wider enforcement co-ordination/training, will take place 26 June.
- *AW/PL/RS/MN to initiate discussions on developing strategic vision & funding opportunities* – Discussions have been initiated and this was covered later in the meeting.
- *AW to prioritise fisheries management planning input* – a meeting with Scottish Government is planned for 20 June. A mapping tool, developed by Sean Dugan on behalf of Marine Scotland, to allow DSFBs to highlight pressures within each catchment has been piloted with some DSFBs. It is anticipated that, if agreed, this tool will form part of wider Fisheries Management Planning template, under development by Fisheries Management Scotland. The content and approach to planning will be discussed with members in due course.
- *AW to develop plan for commentary on 2018 catch statistics* – This was completed – the media coverage was extensive with staff are following this up with MSPs, government officials and agencies.
- *AW to contact assessors to check timing of future revaluations* – this was carried over to the next meeting.

### 3. Policy

#### Strategic Review

Peter Landale provided an update on the agreed strategic review of Fisheries Management Scotland. The first stage of this process was to review the current vision and objectives and slight adjustments were proposed to reflect the changing circumstances since the formation of Fisheries Management Scotland. The disparity between the resources available, and the job at hand, which exists at both a national and local level was identified. The financial constraints on DSFBs and Trusts was also recognised and therefore if more resources were to be sought, it would need to be from out-with the membership.

The Board agreed that excellent progress had been made with this work. It was agreed that the review group would develop thinking further in light of the discussions, consider each objective in more detail and examine what actions are required to deliver and where gaps in resources exist. The review group would undertake this, with input from Alan and Brian as appropriate.

**ACTION: PL/MN/RS/AW/BD**

### 4. Staff update

**NASCO** – Alan provided an update on the recent NASCO Annual meeting and symposium. The symposium, held as part of the International Year of the Salmon, was very informative and a report by the steering group will be available on the NASCO website very soon. This will be circulated to members. Alan will provide a report of the meeting to members in due course. The NASCO meetings provide an excellent opportunity to discuss key policy issues with senior officials, and these informal opportunities are a key benefit of attending such events. **ACTION: AW** to circulate the report of the NASCO symposium to Fisheries Management Scotland members.

**Correspondence with Cabinet Secretary** – Following the publication of the 2018 catch statistics, Alan Wells wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham MSP to highlight a range of areas where we consider more action can and should be prioritised. A response was received prior to the meeting, thanking Fisheries Management Scotland members for our contribution to the conservation of Atlantic salmon and responding in detail to the points raised in our letter. **ACTION: AW** to follow up across a range of issues with key officials.

**Scottish Parliament** - Alan reported on discussions in the Scottish Parliament to bring together a cross-sector discussion to consider current priority issues for salmon stocks, sponsored by Michelle Ballantyne MSP. The purpose of this initiative is to keep the current issues faced by salmon high on the agenda, and to generate cross-party support for action to address these issues. It was agreed that this should be seen as part of a wider suite of events to keep the narrative on salmon concerns live throughout 2019 and leading towards the 2020 Fisheries Management Scotland annual conference. Alan Wells will keep the Board informed of progress. **ACTION: AW**

**Aquaculture** – Alan Wells and Roger Brook reported on the most recent meeting of the Aquaculture Interactions Working Group. The group is now working towards developing recommendations relating to interactions between wild and farmed salmonids with a view to delivering the recommendations of the REC Committee. It is anticipated that there will be at least two more meetings of the group over the summer period.

Proposals for four rainbow trout aquaculture sites in the inner Clyde estuary were highlighted. Fisheries Management Scotland have discussed this with DSFBs/Trusts in the area and facilitated a meeting with the developers to express our significant concern about impacts on local wild fish stocks. This is particularly relevant as the proposed sites are on a clear migratory route for salmon and sea trout, and therefore are in direct conflict with one of the recommendations of the REC Committee. Alan will continue to engage with relevant members and the company as their proposals are developed.

Building on a project funded by Crown Estate Scotland in Lochaber to monitor sea lice burdens on wild sea trout, Fisheries Management Scotland secured additional funding from Marine Scotland to examine the potential to capture and assess sea lice burdens and fish health status on Atlantic salmon post smolts near Ardnamurchan. Unfortunately, no Atlantic salmon post smolts were captured, but the equipment and expertise gained during the project will be re-deployed to other monitoring projects within the aquaculture zone.

**SEPA** – Alan Wells reported on the discussions within the Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group which focussed on smolt passage at hydro schemes. SEPA are now developing their regulatory approach to address these issues across a range of hydro dams and reservoirs. A workshop is being planned to take this forward. Alan will meet the Nathan Critchlow-Watton and Julie Holmes later in June to discuss a range of issues, including those highlighted in the letter to Roseanna Cunningham. Alan has also arranged a meeting with relevant SEPA staff and Ayrshire

Rivers Trust to discuss a range of concerns relating to diffuse pollution, mine discharges, engineering works and fish passage in Ayrshire.

**Guidance for developers** – the Board were reminded to provide feedback on the draft approach for guidance. **ACTION: ALL.**

**Stocking policy** – Marine Scotland have now published their policy on stocking Atlantic salmon. It was recognised by the Board that the policy had been published quickly, and that it would have been preferable that there had been a formal opportunity to provide feedback from the Fisheries Management Scotland membership. However, it was also recognised that the policy was not out of step with accepted international best practice, as highlighted at the recent NASCO Symposium.

**Institute of Fisheries Management** – The Scottish Branch of IFM are undertaking a review of their activity in Scotland and will be convening an EGM later in the year to elect a new Chairman and determine how it will operate in the future. It was recognised that close coordination between Fisheries Management Scotland and IFM was sensible and a meeting has been organised on 1 August to discuss the future relationship between both organisations. Brian Davidson, Alan Wells and Sean Dugan will attend this meeting and report back to the Board. **ACTION: BD/AW**

**Enforcement** – Brian Davidson reported on discussions with the new National Wildlife Crime Coordinator and a more in-depth meeting is planned for 26 June. This will consider strategic co-ordination of fisheries enforcement training and liaison between DSFB bailiffs and Police Scotland. Brian has also met with the Lothian & Borders wildlife crime officer and Karl Ferguson, River Tweed Commission regarding fish crime. This generated a number of ideas, including the concept of a formal warning system for low-level offending – advice from Fishlegal is being taken on this. Further work includes piloting an online exam/assessment on enforcement. This will be developed further with potential for wider roll-out, subject to the discussions on the relationship between IFM and Fisheries Management Scotland.

#### **4.3. Pink salmon**

Brian Davidson explained that a new [webpage](#) had been created on the Fisheries Management Scotland website to provide information on Pink salmon, including specific guidance for 2019. This guidance has been produced in close collaboration with Marine Scotland, SNH and SEPA. There has been a good reaction to the advice, with media interest and positive dissemination of our advice via social media and elsewhere. Whilst no fish have yet been recorded in the UK, some fish are now appearing in northern Norway, which is in the middle of their current range. Should these fish start to appear in the rivers towards southern Norway, this may indicate that these fish could again stray towards the UK. Fisheries Management Scotland is well connected to contacts in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe and any changes to the current status will be reported with the guidance changed accordingly. **ACTION: AW/BD**

#### **4.4. Fish health issues**

A report on the current status of Scottish wild Atlantic salmon showing lesions and ulceration was provided to the Board on 14 June. A number of rivers have provided samples of live fish to the Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) and testing is underway. It is hoped that some results will be available towards the end of the week beginning 17 June. FHI have also published [advice](#) on what to do should fish be observed or captured with the symptoms. The advice leaves it to local wild fishery interests to determine if moribund fish should be killed, but the advice is silent on the implications for category 3 rivers where it is unlawful to kill fish. Clarity has been sought on this point and further advice will be provided. Any changes to the current status will be reported to the Board and publicised more widely with the members. **ACTION: AW/BD**

## 5. Financial & administrative

### 5.1. Draft accounts

The draft accounts were circulated for comment and Brian Davidson explained the key figures. These are the first set of company accounts since incorporation in April 2018. It was made clear that the accounts also represent the assets, income and expenditure of the Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre, which is now a formal part of Fisheries Management Scotland. Brian was requested to clarify a number of issues and some presentational changes were requested to highlight the 'restricted' nature of SFCC funds and disaggregate these from Fisheries Management Scotland reserves. **ACTION: BD**

It was agreed that quarterly management accounts would be provided to the Board, in addition to monthly cashflow against budget reporting. **ACTION: BD**

**5.2. Staff appraisals** – Alan Wells reported that the staff appraisals for Brian Davidson and Sean Dugan are now complete. Alan Wells' appraisal is scheduled for early July.

## 6. Communications

### International Year of the Salmon (IYS)

Brian Davidson provided a summary of work on International Year of the Salmon including:

- The 2019 Annual conference
- The Fisheries Management Scotland Parliamentary Exhibition
- Participation in the Marine Scotland Open Day
- Further dissemination of the *What wild salmon mean to me* project
- Participation in the Kelso show alongside the River Tweed Commission and Tweed Foundation in late July

The Board noted the breadth of these activities and congratulated staff on the success of the conference and the wide audience that was engaged. The scope to widen the audience even further in 2020 was discussed and staff were asked to produce a short brief for 2020 conference in autumn 2019. **ACTION: AW/BD with PL**

## 7. AOB

Richard Sankey reported that the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust had gathered some data on the extent of wild salmon and sea trout bycatch in the bass net fishery in England. Alan Wells

reported that similar issues have been discussed in Scotland, and that a proposal to prohibit all gill nets in Scotland is included in Scotland's implementation plan to NASCO.

#### **8. Future meetings**

19 September and 30 October (AGM). It was agreed to convene the next Board meeting in Pitlochry, to make attendance more convenient for those in the north.