

Fisheries Management Scotland Fish Farming Meeting Minutes

9th December 2020



In attendance:

Alan Wells (Fisheries Management Scotland) (Chair)	Shona Marshall (West Sutherland)
Polly Burns (Fisheries Management Scotland)	Bill Whyte (Wester Ross)
Lucy Ballantyne (Lochaber)	Keith Williams (Kyle of Sutherland)
Roger Brook (Argyll)	Bob Younger (Fish Legal)
Jon Gibb (Lochaber)	Stuart Brabbs (Ayrshire Rivers Trust)
Alasdair Laing (Findhorn)	Carolyn Bryce (Loch Lomond)
Jason Laing (Western Isles)	Isabel Moore (Skye)
Richard Davies (Outer Hebrides)	Willie Yeomans (Clyde)
Alan Kettle-White (Argyll)	

Apologies:

Gill Burn (Skye and Wester Ross)
Paul Hopper (Outer Hebrides)
Chris Conroy (Ness)
Rob Whitson (North and West)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. Alan introduced Stuart Brabbs, Willie Yeomans, Carolyn Bryce and Isabel Moore to the meeting as first-time attendees.

2. Update on local situation

Each area provided a short update on issues arising locally. These included:

- **West Sutherland** – Lice audits and gill health surveys for the local Loch Duart Ltd. farms are starting up again following Covid-19. It was reported that Scottish Sea Farms have not been in contact with the Trust for several months.
Action: PB to contact Scottish Sea Farms to progress local communications.
- **Kyle of Sutherland** – a meeting with Highland council was held in November to discuss Migdale Smolts' Environmental Management Plan. Highland Council are now following up on this with the company. Discussions have been held with Cooke Aquaculture to discuss area management for smolt production on Loch Shin.
- **Western Isles** – The Scottish Salmon Company's Amhuinnsuidhe Hatchery is reportedly closing. Scottish Salmon Company have reported an escape of unknown size at their Procopol site with details to follow. Loch Duart Ltd. have expressed an interest in working with Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust to undertake independent verification of lice counts.
Action PB – liaise with Western Isles to support local efforts on escape response.
- **Skye** – Grieg have pulled out of Skye sites due to welfare issues.
- **Wester Ross** – There is a planned meeting with Marine Scotland Science to discuss the reporter's decision on the North Aird farm in Torridon and the associated EMP. Understand that Scottish Sea Farms are considering an application for 2500 tonne farm at Horse Island. Loch Ewe – trials to be proposed by Mowi for recirculation units.

- **Lochaber** – Following consultation with the Argyll Board and Trust and Fisheries Management Scotland, the Scottish Sea Farms Loch Linnhe EMP been much improved. Mowi's Loch Leven farm has been operating as an organic farm since last year, but it was noted that sea lice control has been challenging.
- **Argyll** – Two new Environmental Management Plans are close to sign off with Mowi. Positive discussions have been held with Scottish Sea Farms for an EMP on Loch Linnhe. Scottish Salmon Company are moving forward on EMPs and extensive comments have been provided. Following the escape at Carradale the Trust has been collecting genetic samples from several rivers across Argyll. Discussions are being held with on Loch Long Salmon Company around proposed new technologies. Discussions with Dawnfresh are ongoing on Loch Etive EMPs.
- **Ayrshire** – Fish farming has not previously impacted Ayrshire but the Carradale escape has resulted in farmed fish being recorded in all Ayrshire rivers. The Trust has been busy with scale reading and monitoring captures across the region. Responded to two applications to planning proposals.
- **Loch Lomond** – There has been significant work on the Carradale escape response and submitting responses to planning proposals that could impact on the catchment.
- **Clyde** – Trust has been busy monitoring the Carradale escape, and genetic samples have now been delivered to Marine Scotland Science at Pitlochry.

3. Fisheries Management Scotland Update

Polly gave an update on the work that has been undertaken since the previous Fish Farming Committee meeting. In summary:

- Update on the Carradale escape including progress with confirmation of scale reading, genetic monitoring work and next steps
- Discussions with regulators including local councils, Marine Scotland (Policy and Science), SEPA and Crown Estate
- Discussions with the producers including report from visit to Scottish Sea Farms' sites, SSPO and Loch Long Salmon Co.
- Update on EMP discussions with multiple companies
- Update on regulatory reform processes including the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, Salmon Interactions Working Group and wild fish and sea lice interaction framework.

4. Planning issues

Polly highlighted that Fisheries Management Scotland is working to develop planning guidance to support DSFBs and Trusts in their engagement with the planning process. There was a discussion about what committee members wanted that guidance to cover and how this might be used in future. Polly demonstrated the Smartsheet tool for both planning proposals and EMP statuses.

5. Discussion around Crown Estate Project

Plans for the Fyke netting training workshop with Industry involvement were discussed and details will be circulated when available. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, numbers will have to be limited and the event will be carefully planned. Polly asked those who had been discussing wild salmon monitoring with the industry to provide Polly with details. It was discussed that a template for this information may be appropriate.

Action PB – Develop template for Crown Estate information.

6. Recent Freedom of Information Requests

Several recent requests for information under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 from Salmon and Trout Conservation were discussed. The importance of a consistent and legally

compliant response was emphasised, and it was agreed that Polly and Bob Younger would support DSFBs in meeting their obligations.

Action PB and BY – work together to support DSFBs in responding.

7. New Aquaculture Technologies

Given recent developments in relation to new technologies in Scottish aquaculture, the committee discussed the proposals and where there were outstanding areas of information. A meeting for Boards and Trusts will be organised with Loch Long Salmon company to discuss their proposal further.

Action - PB to organise separate meeting on new technologies to discuss in more detail after the discussion with Loch Long.

8. AOB

Timings of meetings – it was agreed that these meetings would be scheduled for every 3 months, avoiding smolt migration season due to the volume of field work.