

SFCC Annual Members Meeting

Faskally House: 19 February 2026

Meeting Minutes



Action Log

Date	Action #	Action	Responsible
19/02/26	A1	[carried forward] Beaver Survey Training: Explore and provide further information on available beaver survey courses and methodologies for interested members once the Fish and Fisheries sub-group of the Scottish Beaver Advisory Group has developed a beaver dam assessment methodology	Committee
19/02/26	A2	SFCC to develop scope and work plan for redevelopment of SFCC habitat survey protocol	Graeme Cullen

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies from Cathy Bennet (SEPA)

2. Minutes of February 2025 meeting & matters arising

- Beaver Survey Training: Explore and provide further information on available beaver survey courses and methodologies for interested members.
 - This item is carried forward as the Fish and Fisheries sub-group of the Scottish Beaver Advisory Group is still developing a beaver dam assessment methodology.
 - **A1:** [carried forward] Beaver Survey Training: Explore and provide further information on available beaver survey courses and methodologies for interested members once the Fish and Fisheries sub-group of the Scottish Beaver Advisory Group has developed a beaver dam assessment methodology
- Management Committee Recruitment: Investigate options to involve new entrants in the sector in the SFCC management committee over the next year.
 - Resolved (see agenda item 6)

- Central GIS Account Evaluation: Explore the feasibility and potential benefits of unifying under a central GIS account, including justification and alignment with government objectives and strategies.
 - Resolved (see agenda item 4)
- NEPS 2025 Electric Fishing Programme Funding: Follow up and provide an update regarding funding for the NEPS 2025 electro fishing programme for Scotland.
 - Resolved

3. Management Committee

There were no changes to the SFCC management committee

4. SFCC Update and forward plan

Achievements of 2025

Several key achievements of 2025 were highlighted. The Sonar AI project, funded through Marine Fund Scotland, progressed through phases one and two. Phase one, which focused on building learning models from ARIS sonar data to automatically detect and count fish, was completed early in the year. Phase two commenced in November and was reported to be on track for completion by the end of March 2026. This phase was expected to deliver an updated tool with improved performance, including enhanced capability to track downstream fish movement, shoaling behaviour, and additional species such as eels. Publication of the updated tool was anticipated in March.

The SFCC facilitated training in electrofishing at introductory, team leader, and team leader refresher levels, as well as scale reading training. In addition, GIS training was delivered.

The SFCC expanded its GIS resources through a new enterprise agreement with ESRI, which provided members with improved shared tools, resources, and storage capacity. GIS systems also supported the National Adult Salmon Sampling Programme, with Sean Robertson providing technical assistance.

Considerable work was undertaken within the Riverwoods Digital Centre of Excellence in collaboration with colleagues at the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The Centre was described as a comprehensive resource that would include best practice guidance, funding opportunity listings, a project register, a Riverwoods forum, a practitioner directory, opportunity mapping, a data hub, a showcase, and a digital training centre. Conference attendees were encouraged to engage with the Scottish Wildlife Trust representative present.

Forward Plan: April 2026 – March 2027

The forward plan outlined a programme of activity focused on GIS development, training, data management, and habitat protocol refinement.

A priority area involved promoting and developing GIS systems for SFCC members. Plans included developing, implementing, and supporting new GIS tools to enable rapid data collection both in the field and office environments, while maintaining and promoting existing data collection applications and dashboards. The SFCC GIS Hub would continue to be updated with relevant datasets as they became available, and members would be supported with their own mapping work, including one-to-one assistance where required. Exploration would also be undertaken into transferring or incorporating the SFCC electrofishing database into ArcGIS Online by October 2026 in collaboration with Graeme Anderson.

Planned existing training courses include introduction to electrofishing, electrofishing team leader and refresher courses delivered with established trainers, habitat survey training with Alan Kettle-White, GIS training, and scale reading training with Ron Campbell.

New and updated training courses were also proposed. Member consultation would be undertaken to identify training requirements and ensure that future SFCC offerings met sector skills demands. Delivery of the updated Freshwater Pearl Mussel Survey Course, developed in conjunction with NatureScot, was planned for summer 2026 with Chris Daphne. Demand for an R and Statistics course would be assessed with a view to development and delivery in winter 2026/27, aimed at both new and returning R users. To support long-term use of R and facilitate statistical analysis, regular online sessions for R users would be held. Invertebrate training provision would also be reviewed and potentially delivered in partnership with Buglife.

Work was planned to transfer Fishery Management Plan mapping applications from legacy ArcGIS web mapping applications to the new Instant Apps system by Q2 2027, ensuring continuity as existing StoryMaps will no longer be supported by ESRI after that date. This work was noted to be in its early stages, with this being successfully applied to the Deveron FMP storymap.

Development of the SFCC habitat protocol formed another major strand of work. This would involve reviewing the existing protocol and exploring options for refinement, with the aim of establishing the SFCC Habitat Walkover Survey as the standard salmonid habitat survey in Scotland. Outputs from the 2025 SFCC Conference habitat workshop would inform improvements to the Fish Habitat Walkover Survey. Consultation with SFCC members, government agencies, and external environmental organisations would be undertaken to assess user needs and inform a modular approach. Following completion, updated training materials would be produced in collaboration with members.

Members expressed that they would like to see the habitat protocol data presented appropriately, easily sharable and incorporated into the GIS systems.

A2: SFCC to develop scope and work plan for redevelopment of SFCC habitat survey protocol

Finally, consideration would be given to introducing webinars as an additional platform for communication and discussion among members outside the annual conference, with member interest to be assessed.

5. Proposed SFCC budget for 2026-27

No comments were made on the SFCC budget.

6. Amendments to the SFCC constitution

No comments were made on the proposed amendments and they therefore passed.

7. AOB

Jim Henderson raised concerns about electrofishing surveys being undertaken by individuals who were not meeting SFCC standards. This was also observed in other areas, including Ayrshire, Galloway and Beaully. It was felt that the SFCC Standards should be the minimum requirement for anyone electrofishing in Scotland. Alan Wells has raised the issue with the Marine Directorate and to assess the feasibility of taking this forward.

Meeting adjourned.