

**SFCC Management Committee Meeting**  
**01 December 2021**  
**10:00 – 11:15**



## **Agenda**

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

**In attendance:**

Marcus Walters – Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (acting chair)

John Armstrong – Marine Scotland Science

Antje Branding – Marine Scotland

Sean Robertson – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Alan Wells – Fisheries Management Scotland

Andy Gowans – SEPA

Jamie Ribbens – Galloway Fisheries Trust

Rowan McCleary – Galloway Fisheries Trust

James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation

Sean Dugan – Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre

**Apologies:**

Kjersti Birkland – SEPA

Joanna Girvan – Forth Rivers Trust

Having joined the Board of Fisheries Management Scotland, Jamie Ribbens proposed Rowan McLeary to temporarily replace him on committee. Rowan brings expertise on fish counters and on electrofishing training, having qualified as an SQA Assessor and having delivered the courses for many years. Rowan will be proposed for election at the SFCC members meeting in February.

### **2. Minutes of September 1 meeting, review of action points and matters arising**

**CARRIED FORWARD: SR to discuss invertebrate data analysis options with CM.**

**CARRIED FORWARD: SD/JR to draft an options appraisal paper for discussion at the annual training review meeting and then at the SFCC December management committee meeting.**

Inverness College UHI have confirmed that they are not able to deliver the courses. West Highland College may be able to help, and SD has a meeting with them before Christmas.

### **3. SFCC early-career secondment**

The deadline for applications has now passed and strong applications have been received. Fisheries Management Scotland have asked FishLegal to draft a secondment agreement to be agreed between Fisheries Management Scotland and the host SFCC member. Informal interviews are due to take place before Christmas with a view to having the secondee in post by early February.

SD has requested Shared Parental Leave from early May to mid-July and has requested flexible working to commence thereafter. SD has requested a reduction of 3 hours per week from his current contract, with the remaining hours worked over 4 days.

#### 4. **Manager's report (September - November)**

SD ran four online mapping courses in recent weeks, training over 20 members including several new staff members. Mapping is now being utilised across the majority of SFCC members.

**ACTION: SD to expand the range of mapping courses available to SFCC members to include Survey 123 data collection software.**

SD has worked on data collection tools for use on smartphones/tablets or computers. For example, a redd counting tool was trialled and improved with the help of Spey Fishery Board. A sweep netting data tool has also been shared with the Fisheries Management Scotland fish farming committee. A major focus for the winter months will be further development of these tools and consultation with members.

SD and AW have been coordinating member input to the National Adult Salmon Sampling Project. The project is now in the final stages of completion and an update will be provided by Marine Scotland during the biologists' meeting.

#### 5. **New website**

AW provided a demonstration of the new Fisheries Management Scotland website which is due to go live shortly. Specific SFCC pages have been given a high profile on the new website. These mirror all the key content from the current SFCC website, and it was agreed that the current SFCC website would be taken down.

**ACTION: Following a soft launch of new website, the committee was asked to provide any feedback to SD in advance of taking down the current SFCC website.**

#### 6. **Biologists' meeting draft programme**

SD shared a draft programme for the Biologists' Meeting which is scheduled for 2-3 February 2022. The meeting will again be held virtually and therefore the opportunity to invite speakers from abroad was utilised while maintaining the previously successful balance of rivers/ fisheries trust and government presentations.

Committee provided positive feedback including a request for the SFCC member update session to be extended. An extended discussion on the Scotland River Temperature Monitoring Network and associated management tools was suggested.

**ACTION: SD to discuss possible options and attendees with Iain Malcolm and Faye Jackson.**

#### 7. **Electrofishing database options appraisal**

SD circulated an options appraisal in advance of the meeting to generate discussion and a written proposal from SFCC's current provider, Rockpool Solutions. In summary, SFCC are now in a stronger position and have four potential options:

**1.** Streamline, refresh and update our current electrofishing database.

**2A.** In future, Marine Scotland may be able to add input and export functionality to the current Fish Observations database.

**2B.** In future, Marine Scotland can provide SFCC with the database infrastructure of the Fish Observations database for SFCC to deploy in a way that permits SFCC member access.

**3.** SFCC to continue supporting our members with our current database service.

It was emphasised that SEPA are significant users of SFCC's database, so any solution has to also meet SEPA's needs.

Regarding option 1, SD reported that Rockpool Solutions now have ownership of our database licence meaning that our license, support and hosting all sit under Rockpool Solutions. SFCC's database service is now in a strong position and SFCC has access to developer time if we want to upgrade the service to members.

Secondly, based on significant input from Iain Malcolm, committee discussed options 2A and 2B. Option 2A is Marine Scotland's preferred option and would lead to fisheries data across Scotland being held in one place. This option is potentially a very large and costly task and Marine Scotland need developer time to undertake this. Scoping of option 2A must also wait until after publication of the Wild Salmon Strategy.

Further information is required before a consensus could be reached although committee were in support of options 2A and 2B. Cost and time estimates were required for options 2A and 2B and it was noted that the groundwork for option 1 could be progressed at no cost.

The pros and cons of the various options were discussed in the context of Freedom of Information law. Some of the data held currently in the SFCC database is collected under commercial contract and has commercial value to the SFCC membership. It was noted that this is an issue that has been addressed in England by the Environment Agency and it was agreed to explore this issue further.

**ACTION: AG/SD to scope out the issue further and discuss with Scottish Government FOI department.**

**ACTION: Committee to review database options 2A and 2B after publication of the Wild Salmon Strategy.**

#### **8. Dates of next meetings**

SD proposed the following dates.

Biologists' Meeting – Feb 2 and 3 2022  
Members' meeting – Feb 23  
Committee – May 4  
Committee – September 14  
Committee – November 30

**ACTION: (All) Let SD know of any dates you cannot do and SD to circulate new dates.**

#### **9. AOB**

None.