SFCC Development Strategy
April 2024 – March 2029

Strategic Objectives

a) Provides a mechanism for members to standardise data collection,
b) Co-ordinates and disseminates spatial data relevant to the freshwater environment in a way that can assist informed discussion and decision making,
c) Encourages discussion of fisheries science and management in a forum informed by data driven evidence,
d) Facilitates cross-Scotland scientific projects and provides fisheries data to inform national policy decisions, and to evidence local management decisions,
e) Promotes the development of specialist software in a cost-effective way,
f) Provides training in methods of data collection, management and analysis,
g) Informs Fisheries Management Scotland in matters relating to evidence-based fisheries management.

Operational Objectives - April 2024 to March 2025

Resourcing the SFCC

- Investigate ways to bring extra resource into SFCC, either via a secondment or full-time internship. This will allow SFCC to deliver beyond what is possible with a single member of staff.
- This may involve generating income by providing GIS support for projects which support SFCC's strategic objectives, or bidding for funding on and managing National projects. This would be in addition to GIS support routinely provided to members.

Promoting GIS

- Develop and roll out tools to enable rapid collection of data in the field or in the office.
- Continue to maintain and promote existing data collection apps and dashboards
- Finalise work on a Data Hub which pulls together relevant data layers from other sources, and includes Marine Directorate Shiny apps.
- Support members with their own mapping work, providing 1-to-1 support were required.
- Take a leading role in developing the Riverwoods Digital Centre for Excellence (details to be finalised and signed off by SFCC Management Committee[1]).

Fisheries Management Planning

- Work with the Marine Directorate, Crown Estate Scotland and members to finalise this project. This involves conducting a review of management actions from Phase 1 and supporting members to add additional information into storymaps.

[1] This will become clearer once the Riverwoods delivery phase application is submitted to NLHF in February 2024

- Promote the outputs of this project to relevant parties, with a view to increasing the awareness of challenges posed to Fisheries Managers in Scotland, and the types of actions being undertaken. This may support members to leverage funding to complete management actions detailed in the plans.
- Create a workflow for how the plans can be maintained, reviewed and updated where necessary over time.

Protocol development

- Begin work to update the SFCC Habitat Survey, with a view to incorporating metrics for Nature Finance assessments and digital data collection.

Training delivery

- Organise annual training programme including online offerings.
- Facilitate delivery of invertebrate training with BugLife.
- Facilitate the delivery of Freshwater Pearl Mussel Survey Training.
- Canvass members to understand training requirements, with the view to SFCC offering courses to meet the skills demand of the sector.

Long-term Objectives – April 2024 to March 2029

Supporting Delivery of the Wild Salmon Strategy

- SFCC has a role to play in supporting the Wild Salmon Strategy through building an evidence base through coordinated scientific research and monitoring. Including in the following areas;
    - National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland
    - National Adult Salmon Sampling Programme
    - Maintaining and updating Fishery Management Plans
- Working towards the development of robust Nature Finance metrics in relation to the freshwater environment, see below.
- Continue to develop National GIS tools which support Fisheries Management

Invertebrate monitoring

- Work with partners such as Buglife Scotland, the Marine Directorate and SEPA to explore a National Invertebrate Sampling Programme.
- Continue to offer or coordinate invertebrate training to upskill the SFCC membership, so that members are able to undertake monitoring for projects or Natural Capital assessments.

Innovation and novel techniques

- Keep SFCC members updated with new and emerging techniques which can be used for fisheries management.
- One technique is the application of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, which is being used for fish counting an fish identification. SFCC will identify tasks and workstreams which these techniques could feed into and develop pathways to make these accessible to members.

Development of Nature Finance metrics

- With Fisheries Management Scotland, SFCC has already been involved in some early discussions around appropriate metrics for monitoring in relation to rivers and riparian habitat for Nature Finance.
    - SFCC will continue to feed into these discussions as metrics and markets develop, and try to ensure that metrics are meaningful and reflect changes in the environment relevant to fish.

Creation of a Fisheries monitoring practitioners directory

- SFCC Members are sometimes involved in commercial work, which can bring in an important source of revenue to maintain resources.
- In order to position SFCC members in a position to take advantage of this, SFCC will aim to make sure that members have the skills that are required for commercial or nature finance monitoring, and actively promote those services to interested parties.
- Creation of a practitioner's directory could help to facilitate this, but may also require a SWOT analysis of skillsets in the sector.

Resourcing the SFCC

- In addition to resourcing the SFCC in the short-term, SFCC will investigate how to maintain sustained growth in the long-term. This would ultimately involve sourcing stable funding to recruit another full-time member of staff to SFCC.
- The Job Description for this role would be set by the SFCC Management Committee, and may allow us to bring in skills in some of the following areas:
    - Hydromorphology
    - Data Analysis
    - Machine Learning
    - Invertebrate Analysis
    - ..