

## Fisheries Management Scotland

### Meeting Minutes

Date: 15 April 2024

By Microsoft Teams

#### Present

Helen Feenan (FMS) (Chair)

Rob Pitkin (Lochaber)

Jon Gibb (Lochaber)

Paul Hopper (Outer Hebrides)

Shona Marshall (West Sutherland)

Alasdair Laing (Findhorn)

Morven Mackenzie (West Sutherland)

Alan Wells (FMS)

Charlotte Small (Skye)

Roger Brook (Argyll)

Alan Kettle-White (Argyll)

Bob Younger (Argyll)

#### Apologies

Stuart Brabbs, Isabel Moore, Richard Davies, Nick Beevers, Carolyn Bryce, Brian Shaw, Jason Laing, Keith Williams, Willie Yeomans, Peter Jarosz, Rob Whitson, Rod Styles.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

HF welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2. Local updates

Each area provided a short update on issues arising locally.

**ACTION:** HF to see if operators would be interested in joining a meeting to provide a high-level overview of their future farming strategy.

### 3. SEPA sea lice regulatory framework

#### *Monitoring programme - governance*

HF gave an update on the status of the framework and explained SEPA's governance for the monitoring programme which includes three delivery groups: sentinel pen studies, lice monitoring on wild sea trout and stock assessment in paired catchments (low and high lice pressure) and one overarching stakeholder steering group which will coordinate and provide advice to the three delivery groups.

#### *Monitoring programme - engagement*

HF expressed the importance of engaging with the development and delivery of the monitoring programme and has requested that the sector has representatives in each of the four monitoring groups to maintain buy-in and understanding. HF explained that more clarity was needed on SEPA's procurement plans for the environmental services required to deliver the framework.

#### *Funding*

HF clarified that SEPA plan to recover all costs associated with the monitoring programme from the aquaculture sector via its charging scheme.

## *Compliance*

HF explained that although there isn't much detail on what framework compliance will look like, it is likely SEPA will communicate more about this when they consult on their new compliance regime.

**ACTION:** HF will meet with SEPA to discuss how the Trusts can be engaged throughout the monitoring programme and will seek information on what SEPA's procurement plan is for the associated environmental services.

## **4. Environmental Management Plans**

HF highlighted that although there aren't a huge number of freshwater EMP's, we needed clarity on whether Local Authorities are still resourced to manage them.

HF shared that between now and March 2025 there are potential situations where overlap between the sea lice regulatory framework and marine EMP's may occur. HF asked members if this uncertainty regarding monitoring effort would cause challenges for anyone. HF highlighted issues with current EMP data and report publication suggesting that operators should be responsible for how data and reports are published.

**ACTION:** HF will meet with SEPA to get clarity on exactly what monitoring work they intend to instigate before March 2025 and what the implementation timeline will look like for existing farms being brought on to the framework.

**ACTION:** HF will liaise with planning authorities and SEPA to understand what discussions have been held regarding the future of freshwater EMP's.

**ACTION:** HF will liaise with operators to determine best way forward for publication of EMP data and reports.

**ACTION:** HF to support members with reporting template, ensuring it is fit for purpose.

## **5. Consenting Task Group**

HF provided an overview of what the Consenting Task Group was set up to achieve and made members aware that trials of the new consenting process were live. HF asked members to note any positive / negative changes they observe as statutory consultees so that they can be fed back into the process.

**ACTION:** HF to circulate stakeholder engagement documents from Scottish Government to members who have not received them.

**ACTION:** HF to follow up with members following digestion of the above documents to see if they would value further explanation of what to expect from the trial process.

## **6. Vision for the Future**

HF highlighted that in light of the sea lice regulatory framework now being implemented it may be a good time to re-visit what our vision for the future of interactions is. HF explained the

benefits of conducting this exercise with ourselves and our stakeholders and suggested some ways that we could go about it.

**ACTION:** HF to send proposed methods for establishing a vision to members.

#### *Ways of working*

HF explained that it was important that committee meetings were effective and meaningful for all members attending and proposed that all committee members are asked whether they would prefer to be active participants or informed members. HF suggested that the committee could be split into two more focused groups one scientific and one strategic. HF explained that this may facilitate more detailed discussion on expert topics, leading to more focussed outcomes. For members who have an interest but can't actively participate HF proposes a new mechanism to ensure they are fully informed about committee activities and news.

**ACTION:** HF to circulate proposed plan for amending committee structure to members.

#### *Position statements*

HF highlighted that a few instances have occurred which might have benefitted from having a sector-wide position statement. HF explained that having some sector positions on key topics could help to coordinate and unify our voice as well as provide clarity to stakeholders seeking to understand our positions.

**ACTION:** FMS to review current content and identify areas where high-level position statements could be beneficial.

## **7. Training update**

HF shared plans to deliver an introductory fish health workshop for all FMS members in Q4 of this year. HF explained that she is in dialogue with FHI, SG, academics and the Fish Vet Society to understand what type of training / fish health information would provide the most benefit, seeking to establish a robust fish health sampling regime in the years to follow.

## **8. AOB**

No AOB was raised in this meeting.