

Minutes of the Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board Meeting

At 1pm on Thursday 29th October 2015, at Fasnacloich, Glen Creran

Attendees

Andrew Barker (Chair) - AB
Craig MacIntyre (AFT) - CM
Alan Kettle-White (AFT) - AKW
Maja Pepper (AFT) - MP
Keith Miller - KM
Roger Brook - RB
David Stewart - DS
Stephen Austin (SNH) - SA
Bob Younger - BY

Tom Turnbull - TT
Rebecca Smith (FCS) - RS
Richard McKenzie (LAIA)
Duncan Pepper

Apologies

Tuggy Delap
Hugh Whittle
Caroline Fleming
Stephen Gibbs

Charles Struthers
David Garner
Kenny Black
Beth Nicholson
Gordon Gray Stephens
Marina Curran-Colthart
Jane Wright
Roger Hatcher

1. Introduction and apologies

Thank you to everyone for coming, and many thanks to David Stewart for holding the meeting at Fasnacloich.

2. Argyll Fisheries Trust Biologist's Report

AKW gave a report on current and future activities at the Trust. See separate report on ADSFB website.

MP gave a presentation on river restoration and habitat improvement. See report on ADSFB website.

AFT is doing angling development in primary and secondary schools.

SA suggested trying FCS for grants for tree planting. Also look at the golden eagle aspect of tree planting. SNH should maybe consider riparian tree planting when looking at proposals for broadleaf woodland planting.

3. Discussion on Aquaculture

RB said it seems like aquaculture has been forgotten about with all the other issues going on, such as the wild fisheries review. CM presented some information on sea lice levels on sea trout. We think our fish head north when they leave Argyll, passing many fish farms up the west coast. It would be useful to find out where our fish go. Sea trout tend to hang about in the coastal zone to feed. In Argyll there are not many places to go that don't have a fish farm. Our sea lice data for 2011-15 has been analysed by Irish statisticians, and they believe we are in the low risk zone just now. Regulation of aquaculture in Norway is high, but the same companies in Scotland are poorly regulated. However, Scotland regulates the impacts on the sea bed whereas they don't in Norway.

Fish farm sea lice data shows that the fish farms in Carradale and the whole of Loch Fyne did not meet their own sea lice targets for Jan to June this year. We have been part of the Aquaculture Interactions Management Group which has been meeting and talking for two years but they haven't even decided on their objectives. CM has been trying to get included in fish farm planning consents some monitoring of wild fish populations and ongoing checks with the option of planning being revoked if not met. We are also trying to get 10 year consents brought in. We have reasonably good relations with fish farmers in Loch Fyne, however we have to be careful not to be accused of giving too much to fish farms or even aiding them. AKW believes we have to provide information to inform best management. RB thinks we should use money from fish farms for monitoring but should not take money like it is sponsorship. Our approval cannot be bought. BY strongly approves of educating and working with planners on the issues. Wester Ross have done a good job with this regarding time limits on consents. CM said the idea is that the fish farms pay for monitoring. Currently nothing happens to farms that cannot control their sea lice. RB commented that the Government has said it wants more fish farms, so planners have to have good evidence to challenge fish farm developments. The Government have announced a 10 year project to see whether fish farming is harmful to wild fish.

AKW said the paper from Norway regarding impacts of sea lice is a good opportunity for us. Using data from Norway, Ireland and Scotland combined will give us more to work with. If Norwegian and Irish governments are doing more than Scottish then that would be embarrassing for Scotland. AB asked if there are any EU regulations with regards to sea lice. SA said member states must strive to prevent deterioration, but SNH have not produced guidance on it yet. RMK asked if pressure could be put on the Norwegian government that its companies are operating double standards in other countries. BY asked about the use of wrasse and lump suckers as a means of lice control. CM said Stirling University has been looking at this, and they do work in some low energy, sheltered sites.

RB said there is a meeting of West Coast fishery trusts in November and we will report back.

4. Wild Fisheries Reform Discussion

RB explained that tagging of salmon has been abandoned in favour of categorising rivers on the status of fish populations. Category 3 rivers are those that should be on full catch and release because they are unsustainable. The West Coast is all in category 3. We are disappointed that Marine Scotland haven't bothered to interact with the Trusts when deciding the categories. There is still a ban on killing any salmon before 1st April. RB believes this is just PR, and that we should be protecting the smolts not the adults. Sea trout are not included in this. We don't know yet whether farmed fish, ranched fish or damaged fish will be allowed to be killed.

RAFTS/ASFB are well represented in the discussions and CM is a representative for them. Trusts will be replaced with Fisheries Management Organisations (FMOs). Argyll will pretty much be left as it is geographically. There are currently 26 trusts across Scotland, but there will only be 15 to 20 FMOs. Argyll will be similar to now, with an amalgamation of those currently at this meeting i.e. ADSFB and AFT, and open to a wider audience if they wish to get involved. RB explained the timetable with regards to Wild Fisheries Reform – there will be a draft bill by the end of year, with consultations in Spring. The Government will then consider these by the summer, and it could be implemented by 2018.

RB talked about the funding of FMOs. To be an all species organisation we would need extra staff. There may be income from brown trout fisheries such as Loch Awe. It is possible a rod licence would still be introduced. BY asked about the charitable status of FMOs. CM explained that the Government haven't got that far, they are just looking at the legislation. RB believes that we need to have charities in it somewhere so we can get funding. BY commented that with environmental offences prosecuted by SEPA/Environment Agency, there is potential for an initiative that offenders spend money directly on mitigating impacts.

5. The Minutes of the AGM in April 2015 were proposed by DS, seconded by AB, and accepted as accurate.

6. Matters arising - none

7. Clerk's report

There have been reports of one fish escaping here and there from fish farms and only ever when an inspector is on site. Therefore there must be escapes of fish regularly, which means a constant trickle, which is worrying.

8. Any Other Business – none

9. Date of next meeting:

Amended: Wed 27th April 2016 for the AGM and Annual Public Meeting