

Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board Minutes

Microsoft Teams Meeting, 11.00am, Friday 6th November 2020

Attendees:

Roger Brook (ADSFB Chairperson/ AFT Director)- RB, Robert Younger (AFT Clerk to the ADSFB/ AFT Director) -RY, Andrew Barker (AFT Director)-AB, Alan Kettle White (AFT Senior Biologist)-AKW, David Stewart (AFT Director/ Creran District rep), Alastair Reynolds (Co-opted Director)-AR, Tim King (Treasurer)-TK, Alyssa Stewart (Secretary)-AS, Jonathan Brown (AFT Director-Awe District Rep)- JB, Jane Wright [AFT Director]-JW, Marina Curran-Colthart (Biodiversity Officer)- MC, Ian Tegner – IT, Caroline Fleming-CF, Helen MacIntyre (HM), David Stewart – DS,

Apologies:

Hugh Nicol, Mark Smith, Paul Griffiths, Benedict Justin, Sacha Klengel, Rebecca Smith, Tuggy Delap, David Sutherland

Introduction from the Chair

RB thanked everyone for their attendance.

Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Approval of minutes

The minutes were approved by RY.

Biologist's Report

AKW presented the biologists report at the AFT AGM.

Analysis of Awe Fish Counter

RB prepared a report; however, he thinks the Awe fish counter is wrong.

The counter will be 500-510 for the year, however Mark Everard, on behalf of one of the larger syndicates, sent his catch statistics to RB up to the end of September, being 47 caught. The catch and the counter do not tally and there is a suspicion that SSE's fish counter is flawed. The suspected true figure is 500-1000 which is still a lousy figure.

Discussion and update on aquaculture

RB reported that FMS have hired Polly Burns as their Aquaculture Interactions Manager. Polly Burns will coordinate and ensure the Boards across Argyll and other areas are

consistent with their responses to aquaculture which is key and very important. Polly's background is in Certificated Schemes for Approval Aquaculture such as the ASC standard and she has done a good job in coordinating the response to the MOWI escape at Carradale. Although she is employed by FMS her job is funded by Marine Scotland and the Crowne Estate.

SIWG

SIWG's report was released in May with 42 recommendations. There should be a much stronger regulatory body and there should be an appointed regulator, which was not named in the report but should be SEPA and it should be their job to protect wild fish. SEPA have always denied any responsibility of monitoring wild salmon, and sea lice but are concerned with the farmed salmon's welfare and sea lice on the farm. This would be a breakthrough. The regulator should give a licence based on their regulations with conditions attached and sanctions for escaped fish, this licence should take the place of EMP's.

Andrew was instrumental in getting a question raised in parliament, they stated that a reply would have been made to Donald Cameron's request in due course, 6 months have passed and there has not been a response.

There is expected funding through EMP's however, not all companies are going to automatically give us the job for the monitoring.

The aquaculture industry was going to allocate money for helping wild fish, approximately £0.25million per year, but does not seem likely now. SSPO would nominate the chairman and the wild fish representatives on this committee, this seems to have died of death.

TK asked if the licences would have any implications for projects and the work that AKW would have to do. RB explained that the licence should include the need to protect wild fish and therefor the work should still be there.

Seal Licencing

America will not buy salmon for any country that shoot seals. FMS have found a loophole whereby if the wildlife is being protected, however, it is not acceptable to shoot seals to protect fish farms. The Board have not shot any seals last year.

CF asked if a letter was written objecting to the application for the new fish farm in North Arran. There is a huge objection locally. RY stated that the ADSFB are maintaining their objections.

DS asked if there in anything under the salmon form reform project initiative that RB approves of. RB does not have the details and cannot comment. DS and RB will discuss at a later date.

Clerks report

The clerks report was distributed prior to the meeting.

RY stated that the work the Board have done with North Arran and EMP's. Although the EMP may shortly become redundant due to a new regulatory system. The EMP is a framework by which a specific obligation can be set on the farms to manage adaptively in response to evidence of impact on wild fish. The EMP must have certain components, part of which is an independent monitoring of wild fish and perhaps more controversially some system of risk indicators by which we can have concern of transmission of lice between the farm and wild fish and therefore we can demand management action to be taken through a review or mid cycle through a request for action. The Board is in debate with the industry, as RB mentioned earlier, MOWI are more on board than other companies for example the Scottish Salmon Company are much more wary of committing to these obligations. Scottish Salmon Company need to be pushed to a minimum standard. They are slowly being forced to up their game. Polly Burns is insisting that an EMP is produced to a relatively high standard to ensure there is no additional risk to wild fish. There is an onus on the Board and Trust to ensure that those EMP's work. RY hopes that by this time next year a high standard is set. One of the elements of the EMP's is to have a particle dispersal model which allows us to understand where the lice move within the water column and where fish are most at risk. EMP's are a very important strand of work. RB added that the Board almost always object to those farms but on the basis that these farms may go ahead the Board are then in negotiation regarding the EMP which leaves the Board in a compromised position. BY added that we should maintain our objection to the farms and there is no contradiction. RY used the example of Wester Ross whereby the reporter used the EMP to mitigate any impact by the aquaculture industry. There is a lot of pressure for the EMP's to work.

The Board have objected to North Carradale, North Arran, Loch Linnhie and Loch Spelve. Dawnfresh applications, there are four in the Clyde and they have gone very quiet. AR added that there are no applications yet.

Loch Lomond Salmon Company are wanting a farm in Loch Long, this would be a hybrid farm with an element of closed containment, it is disappointing they are going to areas where there have not been any farms before. The concept is that the net around the farm is impermeable, lice will not be able to enter the farm, it would be great for it to be tested out in an existing farm rather than a new one. TK added that there is an intention to attach those nets to other farms.

Dawnfresh did commit to present the EMP to all those fishery interests on the Clyde, which could be interesting.

RB stated that there is a Technical Advisory Group on which FMS sit with the government and is a risk analysis based on sea lice numbers and the spread of sea lice. It is produced showing a map where there are problems with sea lice, unfortunately the Clyde is shown as a low risk area. Bute and Cumbrae is a bottleneck for all the fish and should be categorised as a high-risk area.

Polly will be coordinating the response from other areas and cut across the boundaries.

The Crowne Estate recommend the sites to Dawnfresh and it seems extraordinary that the Crowne Estate risk their own fishing rights.

Levy 2021

Bailiff Districts - Awe and Ruel:

Last year their levy reduced from £3.10 to £2.90 in the £ and the DSFB retained £0.725 of that.

RB is always reluctant to bring a levy that has been reduced up again, RB commitment on the levy is that it will not go up again in 2021.

Any other business

The Board are due to hold the triannual election next year, all those that are eager to be on the board should be preparing themselves for the spring.

RY informed the meeting that Boards are deemed to be public authorities and are now subject to freedom of information. The Board have already had two requests, RY has been a tremendous support. The Trust is not subjected to the freedom of information clause.

RB thanked RY, AS and AKW for their work and contribution.

Next meeting:

Date TBC