

MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE  
Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 20 June 2021, at 10.30am on Zoom

Present:- Messrs Campbell, McLennan, Picken, Pirie, Stephen and Walker.

1 CHAIRMAN:- CC proposed to speed through the issues in item 5 of the agenda so as to ensure sufficient time for item 6 – NASCO - and item 8 – SANA Ltd and ASL.

2 APOLOGIES:- Messrs Balfour and Wight.

3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:- There were none.

4 MINUTES OF 14 MARCH 2021:- These were agreed, proposed CC, seconded OMcL.

5(i) Consultation on the draft SEPA RBMP for Scotland for 2021 to 2027.

The proposed response by SANA to the consultation has been on the SANA website for comment for some time and has attracted no responses. Those present agreed that CC proceed with its submission to SEPA.

5(ii) Avian predators on fish.

The outcome of this investigation commissioned by MS is awaited.

5(iii) Regulation of the finfish aquaculture sector.

The consultation on this is pending.

5(iv) Wild Salmon Strategy

The revival of this group is believed to be imminent.

5(v) Review of Scotgov policy on salmon stocking.

Documents from MSS on this issue have been circulated but as yet not the review from Scotgov.

5(vi) Numbers of fish killed in 2020.

Following the publication in late May of Scottish catches during 2020 CC has updated the file of fish retained annually. The file is on the SANA website. With the only significant net fishing in Scotland at present being a net and coble one on the Tweed, anglers now kill more fish than netsmen on an annual basis. The provisional NE of England 2020 sea trout catch dwarfs the number of retained sea trout in Scotland. Any opportunity to press MS to raise concerns about this mixed stock fishery will be taken.

5(vii) Beaver policy.

RP reported that permission to hold European beavers in an enclosure in Ayrshire was being sought.

The fear is that there may be escapes from the enclosure leading to a 'wild' population in the area.

The public in general would be more than likely to welcome this despite the downsides for a number of interested groups. While these local bodies will oppose the application there would be little advantage in the MFC entering the lists regarding this application.

6 NASCO

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual NASCO meeting was held via video conferencing from 26 May to 4 June. Meeting reports and papers are available on the NASCO website. The UK, post Brexit, is one of the seven parties to the NASCO Convention and there are now 45 NGOs including SANA.

AW attended most of the sessions including all those addressing aquaculture. Annual production of farmed salmon around the North Atlantic is currently around 1.75 million tonnes, over two thousand times the reported catch of wild salmon. There is a widespread view that action is needed to mitigate the impact of salmon farming on wild fish. There have been great aspirations in this direction for a few years now but only slow progress although it will take some years and considerable investment to move to closed or semi-closed containment of reared fish.

Data on wild salmon catches and stocks and related scientific advice are provided annually to NASCO by ICES. These indicate that the status of wild Atlantic salmon remains critically weak in many areas, particularly in the southern parts of their range. There are many adverse environmental influences in both fresh water and marine habitats, often exacerbated by climatic warming. A great deal of salmon research is underway internationally, including extensive tracking studies, in fresh water and at sea, to identify the main places and causes of mortalities.

NASCO Parties provide Implementation Plans for their own salmon stocks. These are reviewed prior to the Annual NASCO meetings. NGOs play an active part in these reviews. Scotland provides an IP which is well worth reading.

NGOs are expected to contribute to the costs of running the NGO group but SANA has been let off lightly in this respect. Looking ahead to normal times, physical attendance at NASCO can be expensive depending on the location.

7 Catches during 2020 and the season so far.

Due to the imminent closing of Zoom, discussion was minimal. BB had messaged that good numbers of fish had entered the North Esk but fungal disease had broken out among fish held up in low water at an obstacle.

8 SANA Ltd and ASL

CC reported that SANA's second chairman in a year has resigned. He had also recently learned that no administrator has been in post since October/November 2020. In addition no board meetings have been held since Covid started and two AGMs have been missed.

The remaining directors of the company (CC is not a director) may feel obliged to instruct the winding up of the company. There may be ways that SANA can survive but CC thought that he must give fair warning that, in his opinion, it might not. ASL also has no chairman and that company also appears to be in trouble.

*At the time of this meeting viz 20 June 2021, CC had received information to the effect of the preceding sentence. He had no reason to doubt it. Any misunderstandings propagated as a result are unfortunate and regretted.*

In the event of SANA Ltd folding, he proposed that we continue to meet and otherwise communicate so that the MFC is available if/when a successor organisation arises. In the interim, SANA Ltd having been wound up, we could not present ourselves as representing any persons other than ourselves and members would be unable to serve on committees/advisory groups of third party

organisations, including those of the Scottish Government, unless invited to do so in an individual capacity.

RP commented in relation to coaching, competitions and company law.

Members agreed to continue as CC suggested should SANA Ltd be wound up.

Issues relating to SANA's financial position were raised. The funding for the MFC sourced by OMcL and held by SANA should be 'safe' but this will be carefully monitored.

9 AOCB

10 The next MFC meeting was set for Sunday 26 September 2021.