

## MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 29 September 2019 at 10.30am, Green Hotel, Kinross

1 PRESENT:- Messrs Balfour, Campbell, McKay, McLennan, Pirie, Walker and Wight.

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2 CHAIRMAN:-CC appreciated members coping with the delay in confirming the venue for the meeting.

3 APOLOGIES:- Messrs Picken and Stephen. Ronnie was doubly indisposed.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:- None were declared.

5 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 30 June 2019:- Their adoption was agreed by those present

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES:- These will arise under agenda items.

### 7 SANA BOARD AND FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE MFC

CC is not a director of SANA Ltd but has attended board meetings particularly for the migratory fish aspects of SANA Ltd's activities. He detailed the issues, impacting on MFC meetings, which have arisen at recent board meetings, and came to a head at the board meeting on 12 September. One outcome is that members attending MFC meetings will no longer have the option of being able to claim travelling expenses. Another is that the recent arrangement whereby SANA Ltd paid for a meeting room and coffee will not continue. The board has now allowed £120 for the cost of meeting rooms for a year. Given our recent usage, CC negotiated, as a goodwill gesture, a zero room fee for this meeting from the new hotel owners. It was agreed that CC would book today's venue for the next MFC meeting. At that meeting, when OMcL has explored possible financial support for meetings which in the event would be subject to board approval, decisions relating to future meetings will be finalised. With members now often agreeing on, for example, the text of responses to government consultations by email, the possibility of the committee becoming 'virtual', viz holding no face to face meetings, was discussed but was not agreed. Even so there could be informal gatherings for those who wished to meet. Should face to face meetings continue some members might opt to be corresponding members.

### 8 CROWN ESTATE SCOTLAND

CES is seeking comment on two documents by 22 November. These are its Draft 2020-2023 Corporate Plan Consultation and its Strategic Management Plan. CC noted the Vision Statement in the Corporate Plan and gave his take on such statements compared to stating aims and objectives. Both documents are quite lengthy. CC ran through a number of particular points of relevance to SANA which arise in the documents. Links to the documents will be circulated to members together with page and paragraph references for sections of text to which a response may well be made. Members should forward comments to CC although the committee has previously established its position on the relevant issues which appear in the consultations. More immediately there is a stakeholder group meeting in mid October. CC will circulate related material for comment back to him by 11 October. At this meeting CC will be speaking in support of a number of issues on which the committee has previously agreed its stance.

### 9 SNH GENERAL LICENSING

SNH had put out a consultation on general licensing with responses sought by 9 October. Of interest to the MFC are regulations in relation to sawbills and cormorants. CC had circulated a draft response to members and to the NMFC. The resulting exchanges led to the decision that separate submissions from the two committees would have more influence than one. Members discussed the draft with its proposal that open general licences for sawbills and cormorants should be available for the protection of fish, especially those, like salmon, which are listed for protection under the Habitats Directive. With minor changes it was agreed that the submission be sent.

### 10 WILD FISHERIES REFORM

Simon Dryden has now left MS but it is believed that he has not entirely left the salmon arena. His replacement is Antje Branding who heads the Wild Salmon and Recreational Fisheries team. The second year of the extensive sampling by electro fishing at sites across Scotland is underway.

### 11 CONCERNING SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND

There is a regulatory vacuum over biomass at salmon farming sea cages. It is not simple to measure biomass and it may well on occasion be exceeded but SEPA has not taken action. Regulation of biomass might be achieved by setting limits on the mass of food which could be used at site cages. Some consider that the number of mortalities in sea cages might be considered to breach animal rights expectations.

### 12 NASCO

AW has received several documents from NASCO. He will circulate those of interest. All the papers for the 2019 June meeting are now available on the NASCO website. The implementation plans which each country has to provide for the annual NASCO summer meeting will now have to be provided by the preceding November.

### 13 CONSERVATION REGULATIONS

The next iteration of the categories assigned to rivers for 2020 was recently published. This is the second of the three usages of the same approach to assigning categories. The number of category 1 rivers is less than for 2019. Some areas assigned an

overall category might usefully be subdivided given the variability within these areas.

#### 14 CATCHES

While the NE of England net catch of salmon during 2018, the final one, is known from NASCO papers the corresponding sea trout catch, not the final one, should soon be published.

Regarding salmon catches by rod in Scotland so far this year, members all made similar observations. These were that angling conditions have often been favourable and catches not unreasonable in the context of recent years. It was also noted that the uptake and demand for rods was slackening with vacancies where once there were none. Sea trout catches seem to have been much as in recent years.

#### 15 FISHERY MANAGEMENT SCOTLAND

JP attended a regional meeting for members and reported on a number of matters of interest.

#### 16 NMFC MINUTES

There has not been a NMFC meeting since the June MFC meeting.

#### 17 AOCB

The number of pink salmon encountered this year has been much smaller than in 2017.

#### 18 DATE OF NEXT MFC MEETING

The next MFC meeting will be on 1 December at 10.30am in Kinross.

The meeting closed at 1pm with a vote of thanks to the chairman who has had a busy period which is not over yet.