

SANA LTD - MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE
Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 12 March 2017, at 10.30am, Windlestrae Hotel, Kinross

1 PRESENT:- Messrs Campbell, McLennan, Picken, Pirie, Walker & Wight. Also Messrs Ayre & Twaddle.

2 APOLOGIES:- Messrs Balfour, Duncan and Stephen.

3 CHAIRMAN:- CC welcomed the chairman and secretary of the NMFC to the meeting. Whether there needs to be two policy committees had been raised at last month's AGM. Those present agreed that if the MFC and the NMFC amalgamated there would be a need for all day meetings or more than four meetings per year. Given the prompt exchange of committee minutes, present arrangements were deemed to function well. CC has always borne in mind the views of the NMFC when representing SANA at the SRG and other scotgov convened groups on which he sits. One looming difficulty, given the venerable years of most present members, may be the lack of younger committee members coming forward.

4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:- A document giving a legal summary of how conflicts of interest could arise in SANA committees had been circulated. A member with experience of the Standards Committee for Scotland confirmed that the MFC has been following accepted standards. JP declared a financial interest in agenda item 13 but he saw no reason for not contributing to the discussion thereon. There were no other declarations of interest.

5 MFC OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2017/2018

RP proposed CC, AW and JP continuing in their respective positions. OMcL seconded. This was agreed.

6 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 4 DECEMBER 2016:- Proposed for adoption by RP and those present agreed.

7 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 4 DECEMBER:- covered under following headings.

8 WILD FISHERIES REFORM

There was a SRG meeting on 2 February with a Scottish Government press release on 3 February, this document headed 'Wild Fisheries – protecting the rights of anglers'. The minutes of the SRG meeting of 2 February have been posted on the scotgov website and CC has circulated his notes on the meeting. Effectively A Thin's recommendations have been abandoned for the present. With no annual government subsidy made available and a levy on all anglers also ruled out there will be no FMOs. The national unit may still be on the cards. The government is now looking towards many of the smaller DSFBs and trusts to move ahead voluntarily towards larger entities. There will be a national strategy encompassing all freshwater species and responsibility for enacting it may well be delegated to DSFBs or trusts. If DSFBs take on these extra responsibilities they will not expect the traditional levy on salmon fisheries to fund these additional activities. Sources of additional funding other than the salmon levy or a levy on all anglers will probably be revisited by a working group. The linkage between sea trout and brown trout has been taken onboard at the SRG. DSFBs presently have a responsibility for sea trout and in light of present knowledge, by implication, for juvenile trout and adult brown trout. While DSFBs can levy for their income streams, trusts largely have to rely on grants for specific purposes and these sources ultimately are from government. Thus trusts largely address areas for which grants are obtainable. The SRG will be looking at the management of all species. The role of protection orders and the associated liaison committees will likely be considered by a technical working group.

9 CONSERVATION REGULATIONS

The categories assigned to rivers for 2017 showed quite a few changes compared to those for 2016. Most of these changes will have been related to revisiting input data and the subdividing of SFD catches to separate rivers and their corresponding wetted areas. The submission of specific local information has also been taken into consideration and in cases has resulted in changed categories. There remain quite a number of anglers out there who are not satisfied with the categorisation of some rivers. No club has asked for SANA to intervene on its behalf.

10 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ANGLING CLUB SUPPORT

The contract covering this initiative has been circulated. None of those present who have had any direct or indirect interaction with the scheme had any enthusiasm for it and some harboured certain suspicions. The scheme continues to be advertised. Essentially so long scotgovt continues this funding to fishpal it will host angling clubs on its sites at no cost or commissions.

11 CROWN ESTATE CONSULTATION

The deadline for a submission is 29 March. The fourth draft of a response is on the SANA website but has thus far attracted no comments. CC went through his suggested responses to the fifty two specific questions. With minor changes these were endorsed. AW, see next item, drew attention to a book recently published by NASCO. CC would incorporate reference to it in a further draft response. Both this and the specific question responses would be circulated for any further comment.

12 NASCO

This year's annual gathering will take place in Sweden from 6 to 9 June. This year's topics include, understanding hatcheries for wild Atlantic salmon, planning for the International Year of the Salmon and evaluating the annual reports from the contributing countries.

AW is not able to attend this year's conference. OMcL will look into whether he might be able to attend. No funding is presently identified. If there is no direct SANA presence then another NGO may be asked to give some feedback on the proceedings.

AW distributed copies of a near 200 page book recently published by NASCO. It includes the presentations from the NASCO special session on 8 June 2016 which addressed the impacts of salmon farming on wild Atlantic salmon.

13 FISHERIES MANAGEMENT SCOTLAND

The twelve strong board of FMS is now in place. The backgrounds of the board members are known and AA lamented the emphasis on salmon interests. The new FMS website came online last month. The minutes of the first FMS board meeting are there. FMS have expressed their frustrations over the government announcement of 3 February, given the amount of time devoted to WFR issues by their predecessor bodies ASFB and RAFTS.

The first members' meeting of FMS is on 28 March. Following on 29 March is the first FMS organised conference, a continuation of the annual ASFB/RAFTS one.

14 REVALUATION OF SALMON FISHERIES

The current values of salmon fisheries on which the DSFB levies are based are due for replacement after an extended period of seven years. Per fish captured, net fisheries have always been much lower valued than recreational fisheries. Most net fisheries are now unused and most of these are set at a nominal value. There is information in hand regarding what has been paid to some netmen not to fish in the years before 2016. In 2016 coastal netting was stopped for at least three years. It is hoped to find out what was paid to coastal netmen not to fish during 2016. These figures will be of much interest in comparison to the values soon to be assigned to these fisheries and to recreational ones. The coming values are to be set in relation to the tone year of 2015 viz essentially how the 'business performed in that year and what rent might have been obtained'.

15 CATCHES 2015, 2016 and 2017

The EA have not yet published their booklet of detailed salmon and sea trout catches for 2015. The NE of England net catch of salmon for 2015 was obtained from the 2016 NASCO papers. The corresponding sea trout catch has not been obtained despite a direct request to the EA and a similar request to the EA from MS.

Some 2016 catch figures for Scottish rivers have been spotted. These show no great differences from immediate past years. If there is no slippage for 2016 data, as South of the border for 2015, the detailed Scottish figures for 2016 may be expected during April. The FMS 2017 review, expected on 28/29 March, will include the 2016 catches for many rivers as collected by DSFBs. The comparison with the MS figures will no doubt again be revealing.

The 2017 salmon season has started off much as in recent years and the chairman had been tormenting a 3SW fish. There was a report of considerable coastal angling success with sea trout and of a few already in rivers.

16 NMFC MINUTES

AA reported on his response from FMS regarding its attitude towards non migratory fish and grayling in particular. He also noted the concentration of the six NMFC members in the central belt whereas the MFC members are well spread.

17 SANA LTD

SANA Ltd will continue as the governing body for game angling in Scotland from within Angling Scotland Ltd when this latter comes into being. This is by no means certain unless funding for an ASL development officer is forthcoming from sportscotland. With rod licences, for the present at least, no longer an issue the board's attention has moved away from policy matters. Had a levy on individual anglers been introduced without vigorous protest from SANA, the number of members might well have been severely hit.

18 AOCB

A highland angling club has rejected the continued tagging of salmon retained by their members on a category 1 river until such tagging becomes mandatory. The DSFB had sought a halving of the number of tags issued to individual anglers who have rarely used much of their quotas.

A number of DSFBs are undertaking smolt tracking down their rivers and out to sea. Survival rates have varied. The laying of the parliamentary order designating the seal haul area at the Ythan estuary is expected soon.

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next MFC meeting was set for 10.30am on Sunday 25 June in Kinross.

The meeting concluded at 1.30pm.