

DRAFT

SANA LTD - MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 5 April 2015 at 10.30am, The Windlestrae Hotel, Kinross

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

2 APOLOGIES:-Messrs Campbell, Duncan and Stephen.

3 VICE-CHAIRMAN:-AW chaired the meeting in the enforced absence of CC who was experiencing a severe bout of 'flu. He introduced potential new MFC member Okain McLennan. OMcL is secretary of the Loch Achonachie A A and a member of the Cromarty DSFB. He outlined his extensive experience in the public domain. Others present also outlined their interests in salmon affairs.

4 MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICE BEARERS

OMcL was unanimously co-opted onto the MFC.

JP has spoken to Ross McDonald, Kenny's son, who may find another MFC member.

Office bearers for 2015 to 2016 will be, proposed by French Wight, seconded by Bill Balfour,

Craig Campbell chairman

Andy Walker vice-chairman

John Pirie secretary

5 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 26 OCTOBER 2014: These were unanimously approved.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 26 OCTOBER

Comments on fracking, drafted by AW, had been submitted by SANA Ltd to the Scottish Government which has placed a moratorium for the present on any fracking for which permission might be granted.

7 WILD FISHERIES REVIEW

AW has given evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee (RACCEC). Most of the other fisheries stakeholders also gave evidence. The RACCEC has held three meetings at which the WFR has been on the agendas. The first involved Andrew Thin, Jane Hope and Michelle Francis, authors of the WFR, the second fisheries stakeholders and the third Aileen McLeod and Willie Cowan. The full text of the three sessions can be read on the Scottish Parliament website.

Rod licensing and 'Angling for All' remain an issue with some keen supporters but SANA's position remains opposed in principle so long as details of costs and uses of the revenue remain unknown. When pressed at the RACCEC Jane Hope suggested that rod licences might bring in over £2M annually.

Emanating from the WFR secretariat, CC had asked for thoughts on the fragmented landscape of angling bodies in Scotland and how they might be brought together. Those present were uncertain what the fragments were, the three governing bodies or only bodies with an interest in game angling or all bodies related to angling in inland waters.

Given past failures and difficulties after such coming together efforts the MFC had no solutions to suggest.

The Scottish Government has set up a Wild Fisheries Reform Stakeholder Reference Group. Chaired by W Cowan at its first meeting on 26 March, eight stakeholders were present. CC represented SANA Ltd. He has circulated the remit of the group, his notes on the meeting and the minutes of the meeting. Meetings will be held roughly every six weeks with the second meeting on 7 May. It is expected that regular progress updates will be issued.

8 LICENCES AND CARCASS TAGGING

April 30 is the deadline for submissions on the consultation on kill licences and carcass tagging. Extensive reading has been provided by Scotgov/MS. It appears that they want a system for salmon in place for 2016. They provide no details of a system other than that its costs will be borne by licence holders and that proprietors might be the applicants for licences and tags. A wide range of views was expressed by members, as has been the case elsewhere. Many point to perceived anomalies and consequences without suggesting solutions to overcome these. Members did agree that sea trout should be included in the scheme. All agreed that fish landed by net fisheries should carry numbered tags and some record or log book of tag usage should be required. With this requirement on net fisheries, numbered tags for fish killed by rod and line seem unavoidable as the balancing concession. An unknown hampering the drafting of a response to the consultation is the costs to anglers or netmen. How will the overall cost be split between the award of a kill licence and tags if the cost was not wholly on one of these? Will charges be uniform over licences and tags for both netmen and anglers? A vexed issue will be the number of tags allocated, to net fisheries in particular, and who will decide and on what basis. The possibility of the prohibition of the use of certain fishing equipment which is liable to cause greater harm to released fish will also be controversial. CC will soon draft a response which will be circulated for comment.

9 ASFB AND RAFTS

JP attended the ASFB and the RAFTS general meetings on 17 March and the ASFB/RAFTS conference on 18 March.

The ASFB meeting considered the kill licences and tags consultation. There was agreement that sea trout should be

included in the scheme and that tags for netmen should be numbered but there was a wide range of views on other aspects of a scheme.

The power point files of the presentations at the conference are available on the ASFB or RAFTS websites.

Alan Wells, policy and planning director of the ASFB, has been seconded for two years to the Scottish Government to work with the section there which is working towards the implementation of the recommendations of the WFR.

10 NASCO

AW outlined the progress on issues of concern to NGOs who are gaining more direct influence on NASCO policies.

The annual NASCO meeting, the thirty second, takes place on 2 to 5 June in Goose Bay, Canada. AW, as SANA Ltd's NGO representative and a member of the NGO group, expects a flurry of material in advance of the Canadian meeting. Extensive reading is on the NASCO website.

Stung by criticism at NASCO sessions, Scotland/MS now seems to be moving on matters such as conservation limits, mixed stock fisheries and control of catches.

11 ESKS AND YTHAN

'Usan' has pleaded guilty as a corporate body to not having slapped nets during the weekly closed time on occasions during 2013 and 2014 at both Usan and at Gardenstown. A mitigation pleading commenced on 31 March but was adjourned to be continued on 22 April.

Whether there will be both net and coble fishing in the Ythan estuary and fixed engine fishing on the adjacent coast during 2015 is under negotiation at present.

12 THE 2014 SEASON

On the salmon front very disappointing results have been widely reported. Whilst the figures for 2014 for Scotland from MS are expected later this month quite a number of figures collected by DSFBs are in the ASFB/RAFTS 2015 Annual Review. These confirm some notably low rod catches, eg in the run of figures since 1952 the Spey reported the lowest figure with the 2013 figure now its second lowest.

Sea trout catches however did show a modest increase on those of 2013 but remain well below those of relatively recent years.

For this year BB reported an excellent start to salmon angling on the North Esk with the disintegration of Morphie Dyke possibly playing a role. No such start on the South Esk but there are hints giving rise to optimism. The lower Aberdeenshire Dee has again had a very poor start.

13 NMFC MINUTES

These had been circulated and a few items were noted.

14 SANA Ltd

No information.

15 AOCB

AW outlined the history of the Sea Trout Group of which he is one of the present custodians. This body was set up as an anti salmon farming group and soon attracted a considerable fighting fund. Essentially the group has been dormant in recent years but it does still retain quite a few thousand pounds. Other groups/persons are aware of this and have been seeking to access these funds. The constitution of the group is specific as to the uses of the funds and to their destiny should the group be wound up. If wound up SANA Ltd and S&TA(S) would share the funds. In such an eventuality might the monies come to the MFC?

OMcL pointed out that in part 5 of the Environmental Assessment, for the kill licensing consultation, was the first admission in an official document of the detrimental effect of salmon aquaculture on wild fish.

It is understood that members can now claim for car mileage by applying to the administrative officer.

Copies of the 2015 ASFB/RAFTS Annual Review were distributed. It is also available on the two websites.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting be held as usual in late June after the NASCO meeting.

The forenoon on Sunday 28 June was chosen with the venue in Kinross

The meeting closed at 13.30.