

DRAFT

SANA LTD - MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 29 June 2014 at 10.30am, The Windlestrae Hotel, Kinross

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

2 APOLOGIES:-Messrs Duncan and Stephen.

3 CHAIRMAN:-The chairman would check the position of Bill Duncan's parent club. Fred Rhind's approaches to get a replacement for his area had not found a willing person.

4 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 9 MARCH 2014: These were unanimously approved.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 9 MARCH. It was the case that there had been an escape of 150K salmon in Shetland. The salmon farming industry is moving to larger more robust cages resulting in the availability of the replaced cages.

6 FISHERIES REVIEW

Several submissions to the Review and reports from round table discussions have been circulated to members over the past few weeks. All of those present had attended at least one meeting with A Thin. The Review's monthly bulletin for June has just been released. This outlined the developing stance of the Review panel on the seven themes listed in the May bulletin. These themes covered all the major areas of anticipated change and the panel is moving on to consider cross border issues and the relevance to the Fisheries Review Group of the recommendations of the Land Reform Review Group. July 15 is the closing date for submissions to the panel. SANA will put in a supplementary submission. A Ayre will produce a first draft and members will have an opportunity to comment on it before it is dispatched. Issues covered in it will include funding, brown trout and their interaction with sea trout in determining the population of both.

The panel has indicated that the present salmon levies to DSFBs based on fishery valuations will be retained in some semblance. It may be suggested that they are collected centrally but whether the present widely varying local rate per pound of valuation is replaced by a country wide common rate remains to be seen. Areas with no DSFB at present or those with a zero rate would be caught up by a common rate. An additional source of revenue capturing non migratory fisheries and anglers not targeting migratory fish is the controversial issue with the panel saying that a great deal of thought has been devoted to the possibility of a fishing licence. With the chairman using his vote the MFC decided to back SANA's present position on rod licences. The views of those not present would be welcome. However when the details of the recommendations of the panel are published the matter will be revisited.

On trout A Thin has been interested in hearing about the contrast in the resources devoted to salmon compared to trout and other freshwater fish. AW described the complexities of evolving trout stocks as the migratory component varied and the consequent effects on the resident component.

Catch quotas for both anglers and nets may be introduced. The panel recognise that they will be expected to make recommendations for their introduction, controlled by numbered carcass tags. Members expressed scepticism as to the practicalities of quotas as a control measure compared to restriction of fishing effort. The consultation on carcass tagging is listed on the Scottish government web site as imminent, due in summer 2014.

7 NASCO

The annual NASCO meeting was held in early June in France. The NASCO web site has all the many documents produced for the meeting. These would take many hours of reading but a great deal of useful information can be found by a judicious choice of papers. AW read out the press release which added little to what might be expected. It included a plea for funding for continuing research into the ocean phase of the life cycle. CC would find out if the AST's take on the meeting was available. One fallout of the papers concerning Scotland at the NASCO meeting was a statement from Paul Wheelhouse acknowledging that Scotland has not yet taken the required steps towards establishing conservation limits and tackling the issue of mixed stock coastal fisheries.

8 ASFB AND RAFTS

A report on the ASFB general meeting of 19 March has been circulated. On 20 March the annual ASFB/RAFTS conference was held. Notes on some of the presentations were attached to the April NMFC minutes. Most interest was in the talk by A Thin. To the dismay of some he let it be known that aquaculture was excluded from the panel's remit. A talk on stocking by Kyle Young was also unwelcome to those who see stocking as the panacea for ailing salmon fisheries.

9 ESKS AND YTHAN

One of the papers for the NGO day at the NASCO meeting gave the results of the radio tagging experiment at Usan during 2012 and 2013. In both years only just over a third of the tagged fish were detected in rivers. MSS conclude

that the South Esk near shore coastal fishery is highly mixed stock in nature. In 2014 the experiment has moved to tagging fish captured in the lower South Esk. The court cases involving netmen have not reached their final hearings.

Usan Fisheries or a connected company, The Scottish Wild Salmon Company, have acquired the Ythan Estuary fishings and two immediately adjacent coastal stations to the South. Thus far the angling in the estuary continues as in the past and there are no signs of any preparations for netting. The estuary part of the fishings attracts an annual DSFB payment of £11,400 while the two coastal fishings each pay £150. Initial statements from the company regarding netting and anti seal measures caused a degree of outcry locally to the extent that the local MSP, A Salmond, asked A Thin to meet the Ythan DSFB. The meeting was reassuring regarding possible outcomes of the Fisheries Review in relation to commercial netting but on the seal issue, which has been causing angst to estuary anglers, there was no relief. Both banks of the estuary and the land to the North are an SSSI and over 1000 seals have been counted hauled out on the North shore.

10 ACCESS

CC and AW expect to attend a meeting to look into various aspects of rafting on the Tay.

The recently published 262 page report 'The Land of Scotland and the Common Good' by the Scottish Government's Land Reform Review Group referred issues on access to water to the Access Forum. It suggests guidance such as for golf courses and that taking responsible access of water should be further defined. It acknowledges that there can be tensions between anglers and canoeists.

Also in the report is a lengthy section, 12 pages, on freshwater fish. To an extent it pulls no punches in criticising and making suggestions. Much of this could be seen as anticipating the upcoming recommendations of the Fisheries Review. Notably there is nothing on aquaculture, catch and release is criticised, netting is looked on favourably in the context of cultural heritage, DSFBs should be consigned to history, SNH and SEPA should take on a role in fishery management and there should be all species management. There are proposals regarding CEC fishings and the presumptive right of the Crown to salmon fishings. An intriguing sentence also states that there is an imperative to reduce the catch of salmon as part of conserving Scotland's native salmon stocks.

11 CATCH FIGURES 2013

The provisional catch data for Scotland for 2103 were released in late April. Several files were distributed thereafter. Notable features for the year were the rod catch being the least since 2003 and the net catch 50% up on that of 2012 but less than that of 2010. The rod catch of sea trout was the smallest recorded and the net catch the fourth lowest recorded.

The request to MSS for sea trout figures corresponding to those for salmon obtained before the March meeting resulted in the receipt of a file, updated for 2013, for both salmon and sea trout. After adding various quantities derived from the figures in the file it will be distributed to members.

A request to the EA for 2013 salmon and sea trout catches has been acknowledged but as yet the figures have not arrived. From a NASCO paper the salmon rod catch was 16 tons, well down on that of 2012 while the coastal net catch at 61.5 tons, almost certainly largely from the NE of England, was comfortably more than double that of 2012. Thus far for 2014 salmon angling in Scotland has been disappointing. However in contrast to the very poor sea trout angling of 2013 there are widespread reports of much improved numbers of sea trout being present this year.

12 NMFC MNUTES

These had been circulated and the request that reports on round table meetings be circulated was noted.

13 SANA LTD

Nothing to report.

14 AOCB

The Youth Sports Strategy was recently published. It is a glossy unsubstantial document making all the currently accepted noises and angling is invisible. Our submission to its authors has been seen by A Thin.

The S&TA has lodged a complaint to the EU. It is similar to that made by Brechin A A on whose complaint it is thought that there has been some movement.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next MFC meeting was provisionally set for Sunday 28 September at 10.30am in Kinross. Should there be any certainty nearer that date as to the publication of the Fisheries Review the date may be changed.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm