

MIGRATORY FISH COMMITTEE
Minutes of meeting on Sunday, 14 March 2021, at 10.30am on Zoom

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

- 1 CHAIRMAN:- In the absence of a SANA AGM CC proposed that retiring MFC members continue and that the three MFC office bearers continue in their positions, viz CC as chairman, AW as vice-chairman and JP as secretary. The suggestion was agreed on the proposal of FW, seconded by OMcL.
- 2 APOLOGIES:- Messrs Balfour, McKay and Stephen.
- 3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:- There were none.
- 4 MINUTES OF 6 DECEMBER 2020:- These were agreed.
 - 5(i) Consultation on the draft SEPA RBMP for Scotland for 2021 to 2027.
The closing date for submissions is 22 June. CC had circulated a briefing paper highlighting what was included in responses to Scotgov on updating environmental standards and to SEPA under the current RBMP on significant water management issues. Additional ongoing issues of concern or interest to the MFC and the NMFC were also identified.
The discussion centred on five broad subject areas:- river restoration, water supply and waste water, rural land use, man made barriers to fish migration and other actions to improve water quality. Several points were identified for inclusion in the response. CC would draft the bulk of a response with identified inclusions expected from the NMFC, AW and JP.
 - 5(ii) Avian predators on fish. Publication of the results of the analysis of crop contents of birds obtained in the MS commissioned study is awaited.
 - 5(iii) A consultation on the regulation of finfish aquaculture sector is pending.
 - 5(iv) Wild Salmon Strategy. The resumption of meetings is imminent.
 - 5(v) The Scotgov policy on salmon stocking is under review.
 - 5(vi) COP 26 Glasgow. SANA has been asked by the AST to allow its name to be featured in a display highlighting the threats to declining salmon stocks.
 - 5(vii) Scotgov recently published its Fisheries Management Strategy for 2020 to 2030. Migratory and freshwater fish are barely mentioned. The document is heavy on sustainable fishing and indicates a political slant in decision making.
 - 5(viii) The analysis by CC of migratory fish killed, updated for 2019 English catches, is now on the SANA website. Although reduced in scale the NE of England coastal fishery for sea trout continues to take quite a few thousand sea trout from Scottish stocks.
- 6 NASCO

This year's 38th annual meeting will take place virtually over the fortnight spanning the end of May and early June. AW will selectively attend sessions, certainly the session themed on salmon farming. It is before time for the many papers for the meeting to be available.

7 CATCH UP ON CATCHES

Thus far this year with the Covid travel restrictions in force the angling effort has been far less than normal. This combined with the weather and river levels has resulted in no reliable pointers to numbers of early running fish.

MS has announced that its release of 2020 catch statistics will be delayed by a month until late May. From DSFB 2020 annual reports, with exceptions, major rivers experienced larger catches in 2020 than in 2019 despite the Covid regulations greatly reducing angling activity during the late spring and early summer.

OMcL reported that a long running 'end of river' trap for brood stock had taken more fish than for quite a few years.

8 SANA LTD

A Ferguson has replaced D Forbes as president. There has been no 2021 AGM.

With an imminent house move to middle England, D Ogg has stepped down as head of ASL. His replacement is not yet known. He has been an efficient webmaster for SANA and has offered to continue in that role.

9 AOCB

FW is again a member of the Tweed commissioners.

CC had written to Antje B pointing out that the local authority travel restriction prevented many anglers from reaching their local river.

Whether the next MFC meeting might move to MS Teams was raised. It was agreed to remain with Zoom.

10 Next MFC meeting – set for 20 June on Zoom.