

NMFC Report – 2018

The Non-Migratory Fish Committee held six meetings between Nov 2017 and Dec 2018, one at Kinross after the AGM and five in North Lanarkshire at the Newhouse Hotel. Our six members are experienced river, loch and/or rainbow anglers, but are all from the central belt so it would be helpful to have input from other Scottish regions.

We miss former NMFC stalwart Willie Miller who passed away in January 2018. He was SANA's voice on Protection Orders, and when the Scottish Government asked SANA

to monitor the operation of POs he took on the responsibility and became chair of the Ministers PO Consultative Committee. He was also a long term UCAPA official and was well respected by Clyde anglers and by all who knew him. He joins several former NMFC members who have passed away in recent years and was laid to rest in a graveyard overlooking his beloved Clyde. We need additional volunteers, so if anyone is tempted to get involved they should contact the SANA office for more information. Much business is conducted by email so attendance at all meetings is not essential.

Members	Home Area	Meetings attended
A Ayre (V/Chair & sec)	Falkirk	6/6
J Campbell	Glasgow	3/6
A McAlpine	Falkirk	6/6
J Mathew	Wishaw	6/6
K Mackie	Carluke	5/6
J Twaddle (Chairman)	Cumbernauld	6/6

What we do

We try to keep abreast of matters that affect game fishing and inform the SANA board of any actions we consider necessary. We respond to Government consultations and other initiatives that may affect angling, collaborating with the MFC when appropriate. Over the past year these have included Wild Fisheries Reform, devolution of the Crown Estate, Scottish Water's draft new plan, the Forestry Commission's new strategy, and the third phase of SEPA's River Basin Management Plans. These can all impact one way or another on freshwater fish and invertebrates, so we read through the often long consultation documents and flag any concerns we may have. Draft and final responses (usually well compiled and written by Craig Campbell of the MFC) are copied to the SANA website for members' information and their comments (see also the MFC report).

The NMFC secretary continues to receive the minutes of the **National Access Forum** (which monitors *Right to Roam* topics), and responds as necessary to items which might affect angling.

Wild Fisheries Reform (WFR)

Craig Campbell represents SANA on the Government's Stakeholders Reference Group to which he conveys both MFC's and NMFC's views as necessary. However, though some things on the salmon front have progressed, little progress has been made on other species issues over the past few months with many topics put on hold. One is the long awaited sub-committee on POs; an update to the draft Wild Fisheries Strategy has still not been progressed; and funding for the management of freshwater species (other than salmon) remains a problem. Austerity measures and Brexit issues have been more pressing than wild fish issues and we wait with some impatience for work on the Government's promised fisheries vision to recommence.

We also await the implementation of Fisheries Management Plans that will include all species (including salmon). A prototype is to be tested by selected district salmon boards, and we remain poised to comment on progress, but this too seems to have been kicked into the long grass.

The current WFR situation can be viewed on the Government's (supposed!!) "six weekly" update at <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/refgroup>

Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS)

FMS has made great strides since its formation in 2016, and one of its directors has been working with civil servants to appraise them of fisheries matters. However, its work is heavily slanted towards salmon so we continue to jog directors elbows about its professed remit for the care of trout, grayling and other fish species.

Clean water

Diffuse pollution continues to blight many watercourses. It can lead to sediment and algae that infiltrate the bed and cause a lack of oxygen for invertebrates and fish eggs. This year the Forth Rivers Trust ran a training session in measuring phosphate and nitrogen levels, and Linlithgow AC is now carrying out checks in conjunction with its regular Avon fly monitoring programme. Results are sent to SEPA and the Riverfly Partnership's *Anglers Riverfly Monitoring Initiative* database. NMFC encourages more clubs to engage in such activities, especially if their waters suffer from poor fly hatches and/or less than expected trout recruitment.

Young angler recruitment

It is well recognised that we need more young people to come into angling. Parties like ADBoS and AFYD have tried to set up “national” schemes with only limited success, and the Government’s *Angling Promotion and Development* project seems to have hit the skids. We now have FMS and Countryside Learning setting up a development scheme, so hopefully it will prove more successful than earlier attempts. Meanwhile, SANA coaches do a fine job encouraging clubs to recruit youngsters, with Linlithgow AC praising Jim Mathew and his team for twice helping to teach a local scout group how to fish. Several other clubs are putting their toes into the water, including UCAPA which has successfully established angling groups in a number of Clyde-side schools teaching fly-tying and organising fishing outings. However, we need more anglers to volunteer their time if we are to encourage youngsters to abandon their IT obsession and find lifelong enjoyment by the waterside with a fishing rod.

Predation

Last year we pointed anglers at Cormorant Watch 2 run by the Anglers Trust, but it didn’t last very long and is now redundant. However, we note FMS is having talks with SNH about reducing the problems caused by sawbills and other avian predators, and we wish them every success.

Beavers

These animals continue to expand their range and are now in parts of the Forth system. The Government has decreed they are to be a protected species, though subject to licensed management where their activities create conflicts. In order to manage potential conflicts SNH is developing guidance and support for land, infrastructure, and fisheries managers, and we await the outcome with interest. FMS and the Tay Fishery Board represent fisheries managers on the Scottish Beaver Forum on whose deliberations we keep an eye.

Reservoirs

One of our members has been monitoring the development of charges by SEPA for the safety of reservoirs. After their dams were placed into one or other of various categories some owners are now being billed. Our man’s own club has experienced their loch being placed into the wrong category and have challenged both this and the costs charged with some success, so others should be vigilant and aware that all may not be as it should be.

Alan Ayre
Dec 2018