



## **NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Time:** 14:00

**Date:** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**Location:** Kingsmill Suite, Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club

**Present:**

Andrew Duncan: Ness Castle, Mandate (AD) *Acting Convenor*  
William Armstrong: River Oich, Mandate (WA)  
Neil Cameron: Ness & Beaulay Fisheries Trust (N&BFT), Co-option (NC)  
Annie Girvan: River Moriston, Mandate  
Angus MacGruer: Co-Option (AMcG)  
Graham MacKenzie: Co-Option (GMcK)  
Bob Morgan: River Gary, Mandate/Alternate (BM)  
Alexander Patience: Netsman, Co Option (AP)  
Alan Scott: Angling Club, Co Option (ASc)

**In Attendance:**

Alastair Stephen: SSE (ASt)  
April Conroy: Board Secretary  
Chris Conroy: Chief Executive/Clerk (CC)  
John MacColl: Head Bailiff (JMCC)  
Nick Barker: (N&BFT), (KW)

**Observing:**

Jimmy Gibb: Balmacaan Estate  
John Reid: Inverness Angling Club

**Apologies:**

Michael Martin: Dochfour, Mandate (MM) Chairman  
Ken Gowans: Highland Council, Mandate (KG)  
Ben Leyshon: Scottish Natural Heritage  
Ryan Rutherford: Ness Side, Mandate (RR)

### **1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Acting convenor Andrew Duncan noted apologies from Michael Martin the Dochfour Mandate and Chairman, Ken Gowans the Highland Council Mandate, Ben Leyshon Scottish Natural Heritage and Ryan Rutherford the Ness Side Mandate.

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

AD invited review of the minutes from the previous Meeting. No comments were raised. GMcK proposed that the previous Board Meeting Minutes were approved and this was seconded by AS.

### **3. ACTIONS**

The Actions log was reviewed. Decisions noted on the Actions Log.

#### **4. H & S REPORT**

CC reported that the NDSFB Bailiffs hosted a Regional Water Bailiff Training Day in collaboration with Police Scotland.

#### **5. GOOD GOVERNANCE**

##### ***Complaints Procedure***

CC noted that a new version has been published containing the new address, with all other aspects the same.

AP raised two issues with the policy:

1. AP suggested that the person who is submitting a complaint should not be anonymous as this removes the ability of the person who is accused to ask questions about the complaint; and
2. Camera evidence should not be upheld without the permission of the owner of the fishings.

AD suggested the current procedures be submitted to the Scottish government and that AP be given until the next board meeting to seek legal advice and suggest further changes. This was agreed.

##### ***Register of Interests***

GMaCk noted a correction on his own declaration of interest.

AD urged all members to submit their interests even if this is a nil return.

#### **6. DIRECTOR/CLERK'S REPORT**

AD asked for comments and questions on the Directors Report.

GMaCk asked for clarification on whether bird scaring is still allowed. CC confirmed that it is acceptable to scare birds with a starting pistol as long as you are mindful of not disturbing nesting birds.

CC was asked to take an action to investigate the potential for a trial of acoustic scaring devices for seals in the River Ness.

ASc suggested the terminology in the Directors report was probably intending to say 'working closely' not 'loosely' [with the IAC]. CC concurred.

CC provided a brief update on the salmon festival and indicated that Carol Langstone (Create) and Melanie Smith (UHI) are now leading.

Fish passage over the weir at the mouth of the Holm Burn was discussed. BM questioned the merits of the SNIFFER fish passage assessment, CC confirmed that it had been completed at minimal cost (a contribution to equipment hire). ASt suggested that a restricted channel similar to the Dochfour Smolt Pass might be a cost effective solution to facilitating fish passage. AD Suggested he facilitate a meeting with CC, Mr MacDonald and Mr Sutherland to discuss the way forward.

WA asked about legality of fishing with worms. JMc confirmed that worms cannot be used above Dochfour for salmon however that they can fish for trout with worms.

## **7. FINANCE REPORT**

Finance report including proposed budget were reviewed by AD.

Discussion was had about the reasons for the delay in the genetic project and the reasons for carrying this forward to the next financial year. There was some discussion around the causes of the delay and it was agreed that the project should be giving full support to go ahead.

## **8. HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT**

The Head Bailiff report was reviewed. JMcC added that there were 2 further charges taken this weekend resulting from incidents in Fort Augustus.

A Sc noted seals spotted on the Angling club waters. CC took an action to produce a Seal Sighting Recording sheet for IAC.

CC noted joint patrols carried out with the Police and Spey Board on Loch Ness. Another shore based patrol was also carried out with the police and the police are actively approaching the Board about future patrols. A letter has been sent to 20 proprietors of Loch Ness providing them with a standard template for permits and the responses to date have been positive.

JMcC raised issues regarding proof of intent to fish for trout versus salmon and the procedural difficulties this presents to bailiffs.

## **9. NBFT BIOLOGISTS REPORT**

AD introduced NB and welcomed him to the meeting.

NB reviewed the NBFT Biologists report section by section.

AP noted a known patch of Japanese knotweed. CC confirmed this patch was known and would be addressed as part of the Invasive Plant Project. GMC noted American skunk cabbage issues at Dochfour and CC confirmed this has been noted and would also be addressed as part of the Invasive Plant Project.

NB urged members to volunteer or encourage other volunteers to participate in the Mink Initiative.

NC noted that there is a balance being reached between taking on enough contract work to financially support the board and not taking on too much so that core work streams were not affected. NC also noted that it is working very well having CC on board as the new Director and that he has tightened up the administration and addresses key elements including the website.

## **10. NESS DISTRICT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN**

CC noted that the current fisheries management plan is a joint effort by the NBFT and NDSFB. He proposed that this should become a live document and reviewed each year. He also noted that there would be a summary version made available for easier reading.



CC proposed that after the report had been reviewed internally, a public consultation should be carried out. AD urged all board members to read and consider the document, especially section 7. AP asked where coastal netting was covered. CC directed him to section 7.3.

CC noted that there may be more actions than can be achieved, but that he thought it important to include them all as an aspirational target. AD confirmed that the action list might be prioritised by the Board.

BM commented that the cover photograph did not match NDSFB guidelines regarding fish handling.

BM asked for a definition of the difference between a grilse and a salmon to be included, next to each graph.

CC asked whether all members are happy with the public consultation plan. The board agreed.

BM asked that Andrew Thin should be invited to comment.

## **11. WILD FISHERIES REVIEW**

There was a discussion about the Wild Fisheries Review which is currently in progress. CC gave a summary of the review panel's May update.

## **12. SUPPORT FOR INVERNESS ANGLING CLUB**

ASc noted that IAC have put a request to the Highland Council asking for 5 years of support in the form of reduced rent rates in order to recover their financial position and increase membership without an undue levy on its members. Meetings have yet to confirm whether this will be passed, however the IAC remain hopeful. A longer discussion was held about youth engagement and there was much support for engaging young anglers.

## **13.AOCB**

AP announced that funding has been secured for a Sea Food Trail along the Black Isle with an event being held on Rosemarkie beach. AP asked whether the Board would allow a demonstration of net and cobble fishing at this event. Members asked that all Salmon caught should be returned. CC took an action to contact Kathryn Logan and also to consider potential research opportunities which could be linked to the event. This might include taking scale samples and tagging of any wild salmon caught before their release. Board members asked to be informed when the date is confirmed.

NB confirmed that the NBFT will be represented at the Moy game fair, sharing a tent with a number of other local fisheries trusts.

AG noted that the fish featured on the cover of the draft Fisheries Management Plan has since been re-captured and was returned safely to the river once again.

AD concluded the meeting.

**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 17:08**