

Cromarty Fisheries



THE CROMARTY FIRTH FISHERY BOARD MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Torr Achilty on Friday 28th September 2012 at 11am

Present		In Attendance	
Mr A Matheson Convenor	AM	The Lord Nickson Cromarty Firth Fishery Trust	DN
Mr W Paterson Netsman	WP	Mr S McKelvey Director	SM
Maj A Campbell Upper Fairburn	MAC	Mr J Urquhart Dingwall Angling Club	JU
Mr A Craik Evanton Angling Club	AC	Mr R d'Anyers Willis Conon Fishings Syndicate	RW
Mr O McLennan Loch Achonachy Angling Club	OM	Mr K Beaton SEPA	KB
Mr J Cameron Alness Angling Club Vice Mr C Blake	JC	Mr E Rush Head Bailiff	ER
Lt Col P Hingston Fairburn Fishing Partnership	PH	Mr R Whitson Clerk	RSMW

The Convenor declared the meeting open. The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1	APOLOGIES	Action
	<p>Apologies were received from;</p> <p>Mr I Duncan Mr R Munro Ferguson Mr F Clarke Mr I W Paterson Mr A Humphries Mr P Grant Tycope Limited The Crown Estate RSPB Scottish Ministers Alness Limited Mr and Mrs Cumberledge Dr A Stephen Mr B Leyshon Mr I Rathbone</p>	
2	MINUTES OF MEETING, 27th April 2012	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated and adopted.	
3	MATTERS ARISING	
	These were to be dealt with during the course of the meeting.	
4	ACCOUNTS	
	<p>AM described the Year End accounts for the financial year 11/12. There was one point of note, that whilst the Board's profit and loss account showed a surplus, the annual budget is a cash budget and does not reflect depreciation hence the deficit identified is as a result of depreciation and not through a lack of cash resources.</p> <p>Bank Balances:</p> <p>Clydesdale Bank £24,585.57 HSBC £38,947.66</p>	

	<p>Grand total of £63,533.23</p> <p>The way in which some expenditure was recorded was not clear and it was agreed that riverbank restoration would be shown more clearly in the future accounts to correctly reflect expenditure.</p>	
5	DIRECTOR'S REPORT	
	<p>A copy of the report is appended to these minutes.</p> <p>SM gave a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the substantial progress that has been achieved through the Corrie Feol restoration project, invasive plant clearance, invasive animal clearance; namely mink and crayfish. Fly monitoring, genetics research describing the genetic strains of the fish and throughout the catchment. He also discussed a code of good practice for fishery management.</p> <p>The Cromarty Firth Fishery Board website is now live and can be found at www.cromarty.dsfb.org.uk</p> <p>At the end of the report SM answered questions.</p> <p>OM asked if it was unusual to see smolts in August. SM responded that there can be a double smolt run, it is not uncommon and that they could be sea trout smolts.</p>	
6	HYDRO REPORT	
	<p>A written report from AS was circulated. The main issue discussed was the Contin hatchery and the improvements/refurbishment due to it.</p> <p>Given the expense and the need not to interrupt production, the work would have to be phased.</p>	
7	TRUST REPORT	
	<p>DN gave a brief history of the Trust for those who were unaware of it. He further described how the Trust and Board are integrated.</p>	

	<p>RW asked whether it was acceptable for the Trust to accept donations. DN commented that they would be happy to accept any donations.</p> <p>Any applications for Trust grants should be made through SM and disbursements are agreed principally at the Spring meeting although this could happen at other times if required.</p>	
8	CONSERVATION POLICY 2013 AND CARCASS TAGGING	
	<p>AM explained that the Conservation Policy for 2014 would be no different to that which is currently in place.</p> <p>Comments were requested with regard to the carcass tagging trial that has been ongoing.</p> <p>There were a number of very useful comments and observations. PH questioned the long term gain, specifically with regard to poaching. In Eastern Europe there is a culture of fishing without permission. SM responded that much of the purpose of the process was to deter those attempting to sell untagged fish and that the Aquaculture and Fisheries bill should go some way to address this issues we hope. PH emphasised that he was positive about the process and happy to support it.</p> <p>AC understands the Logic but unless it becomes law, he feels that it cannot achieve the aim.</p> <p>AM emphasised that the Boards wish to run a pilot scheme was specifically to see how the process could work and to identify weaknesses.</p> <p>JU gave Dingwall Angling Club perspective that low numbers of fish were caught and a result this may skew results. Club members were concerned that multiple club memberships would possible result in multiple tag acquisition and so total numbers of fish would not be an</p>	

accurate reflection.

AC is awaiting the end of season to get a full reaction from the Evanton Angling Club.

JC commented on the Alness Angling Club. They had bought into the scheme as a club, however, they are having problems regarding catch returns and an accurate number of fish caught with difficulties balancing tags against fish caught.

OM gave the Loch Achonachy Club view. Out of 250 members they had all bought into the scheme. Members accept the need to wait for the end of the season. They are gathering catch returns currently and generally happy.

There was confusion as regards to what should happen to the unused tags at the end of the season.

AM commented that unused tags should be collected in, certainly as far as club level.

ER gave his response, that some anglers felt if the scheme was voluntary they would not take part in it with comments such as 'the netsman don't have to tag, why should we?'

Others were querying the scientific basis and some are reluctant to carry the A4 Catch Record sheet, worried that it may get wet. It was agreed that as a group this would be looked at.

RW gave a syndicate view, some of his members were concerned that due to the catch/release policy, spring fish that were returned may be caught elsewhere later in the season. However, they were generally supportive.

AC asked what progress had been made with netsmen and tagging. It is hoped that the Aquaculture and

	<p>Fisheries bill should address this when it becomes law.</p> <p>AM closed the discussion with a comment that the Board had been proactive in so many ways with regard to the science of fish management and other processes.</p> <p>This is in line with that way of thinking and other Boards would be looking to us for our findings. Lessons learned from this would be carried forward for future years and it is proposed that the trial will run for at least one more year.</p> <p>It was further agreed to hold a meeting on 19th November to get a full post season report from all affected parties, particularly the angling clubs.</p>	
9	ACQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES BILL UPDATE	
	We are awaiting the presentation of the bill to the Scottish Parliament Guidance will be issued once that has taken place.	
10	WEBSITE	
	AM described the CFFB website and encouraged members to visit the website for regular updates and information.	
11	EU LIFE BID	
	<p>SM briefed the Committee that a EU Life Bid had been submitted; a five year programme designed to tackle invasive species over 5 years.</p> <p>The bid was worth approximately £5 million across all the trusts and could be of great value.</p> <p>AS highlighted the onerous burden of record keeping. The results of the application will be published in April and we look forward to that.</p>	
12	TCV APPRENTICE	
	The Board had been approached by the Trust for Conservation volunteers who have funding for an 18 month fishery apprenticeship.	

	SM has interviewed and offered employment to Natalie Young with a 15 th November start date.	
13	CONVENOR'S SUCCESSION	
	<p>AM reiterated his intention to stand down as Convenor.</p> <p>ID has made it clear that he is willing to stand as Convenor. A proposal was made to the Board: AM proposed ID's election, seconded by RW and PH. Those present gave unanimous approval also.</p> <p>It was decided that ID will assume this role 12 months hence, at the 2013 AGM.</p>	
14	AOCB	
	<p>JC raised concerns that the Alness fish stocks had depleted substantially and asked what the plan was for the Alness river and whether there should be a hatchery provided for that system.</p> <p>SM responded that salmon had access to much more of the river when compared to the Conon, therefore, it is less likely to be stocked. Kildermorie Hydro scheme will open much of the upper water and a hatchery should not be used where natural spawning occurs. The Contin hatchery is in place because of the hydro scheme and is reasonably unique. The problem is more likely to be marine survival and not access.</p> <p>DN requested whether we could make a 5 year comparison on rod catches for the Alness and Conon systems. KB mentioned that he was happy to discuss any issues regarding the Alness river from SEPA's perspective if required.</p> <p>AC also mentioned the issue of genetics differences between Alness and Allt Graad fish. SM commented that they had very different characteristics and different behaviour. He emphasised the Allt Graad had suffered significant disturbance due to hydro related activities.</p> <p>MAC raised the issue of bio security and whether anglers</p>	RW

	<p>should be required to disinfect fishing gear prior to going in the water.</p> <p>SM agreed and all owners should do everything they can to limit the spread of disease or invasive species. The two highest risks to aquaculture are the movement of fish and nets and to break the pathways is the key, as once a river has been infected it is impossible to clear it of non-native species.</p> <p>WP asked whether the Board was concerned with the number of seals off the coast and that an allocation of 5 seals as a cull target was inadequate when compared to somewhere like Gardenstown where an allocation of 25 seals has been made.</p> <p>It was agreed that we would enquire as a board as to what procedures are in place for allowing the licensing of a higher seal cull.</p> <p>RW asked whether when the minutes are produced whether the interest of each of the persons attending the meeting can be identified, this has been put into action with these minutes.</p> <p>DN raised the issue of washing of aquaculture nets locally and a discussion followed. PH had been approached with a view to allowing the washing of aquaculture nets in a redundant dairy. SM commented that with a higher risk to aquaculture within the pristine environment, the Boards position would be one of fighting against any likely net washing facilities.</p> <p>PH gave thanks to the Board for the work done on the River Orrin. High levels of fish are now present to the extent that he had employed a new ghillie and as such a new fishery had been created.</p>	<p>SM/RSMW</p> <p>RSMW</p>
15	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	Friday 7 th June 2013	

	The meeting was subsequently closed.	
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