

Minutes

Beauly District Fishery Board

Project: Board Meeting

Venue: Lovat Arms Hotel

Our ref:

Date: 30 June 2015

Present: J Miller; F Spencer-Nairn; M Spencer-Nairn; J Whitbread; G Purdie; P Pacey (Beauly Angling Club)

In attendance: N Barker & C Conroy (Ness & Beauly Fishery Trust); A Campbell (Clerk)

| Description | Action |
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| 1 Apologies | |
| 1.1 There were no apologies. | |
| 2 Minutes of the Board Meeting of 4 December 2014 | |
| 2.1 The minutes of the Board Meeting of 4 December 2014 were approved by those present. The Clerk to publish on the Board's website. | Clerk |
| 3 Matters Arising | |
| 3.1 The Clerk reported that no sawbills had been shot in 2015 due to illness amongst the nominated marksmen. This had only become apparent after the licence deadline. The Board expressed disappointment at this and asked that in future years alternative marksmen be nominated in the event of incapacity. | |
| 3.2 Chris Conroy reported that robust counts of sawbill numbers had been carried out along the length of the river in spring 2015. These counts would be used to support a licence application for 2016. | |
| 3.3 The Clerk reported that so far this year no seals had been sighted or shot within the authorised areas at the river mouth. Paul Pacey confirmed that he was encouraging angling club members to report sightings in order that action could be taken, though there was limited opportunity outwith built up areas. The recent bad publicity concerning seal shooting on the Moray coast was also a concern. | |
| 4 Good Governance | |
| 4.1 There were no relevant declarations of interests arising in respect of the agenda for the meeting. | |
| 4.2 The Clerk confirmed that the Board had received no formal complaints since the last Board meeting. | |

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| 5 Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust (NBFT) Report | |
| 5.1 An update from NBFT on progress towards the Fishery Management Plan actions was circulated to Board members. The Chairman requested that in future this be produced and circulated ahead of Board meetings. | NBFT/Clerk |
| 5.2 Chris Conroy reported a delay by Marine Scotland in implementation of the study project to track fish movements, which had been agreed with representatives of Moray Firth DSFBs as part of the Moray Firth windfarm environmental mitigation. This was likely to be delayed by at least one year and possibly indefinitely. The Board expressed disappointment and concern at this. | |
| 5.3 Nick Barker summarised progress against a number of action points in the Fishery Management Plan: - | |
| 5.3.1 Water Abstraction: Comments had been submitted to SEPA on a number of CAR licence applications. | |
| 5.3.2 Predation: A comprehensive sawbill count had been undertaken to inform next year's control licence application. Discussions were being held with other Moray Firth Trusts concerning a possible study into dolphin predation. | |
| 5.3.3 Non-native Species: Eradication of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam began in earnest in 2014. The effect on the former at Bridgend Burn had been good. This will continue in 2015 with the addition of salmon berry. | |
| 5.3.4 Mink: Volunteer numbers has increased to 40 (Ness & Beauly areas), allowing a greater number of traps to be deployed. Three mink had been trapped and destroyed in 2015 to date. | |
| 5.3.5 Moray Firth Trout Initiative: There had been a welcome increase in scale sample returns from anglers over the last year, mainly from Beauly Angling Club. | |
| 5.3.6 Redcastle Burn: A habitat survey was ongoing to assess the upper reaches for potential benefit in opening up a historic dam. | |
| 5.3.7 Culburnie Burn barrier: Work to ease this structure was complete. The burn will be surveyed to assess the impact. | |
| 5.3.8 Bridgend Burn: Works to the culvert here were also complete. Thanks were expressed to Lovat Estate for their assistance with this project. | |
| 5.3.9 Blackburn: Electro-fishing surveys were planned to assess existing use by fish below the weir at 'Poles Camp', this would help inform any plans for removal of the weir. A full flood assessment will be needed for any works. | |
| 5.3.10 Belladrum Burn: No action had been taken to date regarding reducing agricultural impact on this stretch of burn | |

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| 5.3.11 Historic Aquaculture Impact: ' <i>Consider use of SNP genetic assessment to identify degree of genetic introgression</i> '. It had been concluded that the cost of genetic sampling was currently too high and this work was not currently cost-effective. | |
| 5.3.12 Floy-tagging & Scale-sampling: This has commenced on the Beauly in 2015. In order to provide useful results this will need to continue for a few years. It is hoped this will help confirm the destination of the early-running component. The Board requested that results be circulated. | NBFT |
| 5.3.13 Deanie Burn: For reasons unknown the Deanie Burn does not support an established salmon population. NBFT to complete a project brief outlining limiting factors and possible remedial actions. | |
| 5.3.14 Talks have begun with SSE to investigate ownership and possible remedial actions for a recent culvert replacement at a small tributary of the Farrar which has the potential to inhibit upstream migration of adult salmon. The potential smolt production upstream was thought to be low. | |
| 5.3.15 Burn at Tomich village: Surveys carried out in 2014 by NBFT indicate limited juvenile fish use of an altered section of bed, possibly relating to a historic mill. Discussions with the land owner showed support for remedial action. A survey will be required by SEPA specialists. | |
| 5.4 Frank Spencer-Nairn expressed concern that the big flood in March 2015 might have washed out a large number of redds. Nick Barker confirmed they would be looking out for evidence of the impact on fry numbers during their 2015 electro-fishing programme. | |
| 6 SSE Liaison Meeting Report | |
| 6.1 The Chairman reported that a meeting of the SSE liaison committee had taken place on 10 June 2015. Draft minutes of that meeting were circulated to the Board. | |
| 6.2 The Chairman reported that Alastair Stephen of SSE had brought data for the fish pass counters dating from the 1960s and 70s. This data showed there had been an apparent discrepancy in numbers between the two dams at that time, as well as now. Then as now, the extent of discrepancy varied from year to year, possibly related to flow levels or fish numbers. | |
| 6.3 The comments within the draft minutes on maintenance works at Fasnakyle, Deanie and Culligran power stations and the impact of these on water flows were noted. | |
| 7 SG Wild Fisheries Review | |
| 7.1 The Clerk confirmed a response had been submitted on behalf of the Board to the consultation on licenced killing of wild salmon. This can be found in the 'News' section of the Board's website. | |

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| 7.2 The Chairman reported on the more recent consultation on proposals for administration of wild fisheries, including replacement of DSFBs with new Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs). The Chairman had recently attended a seminar held by ASFB to discuss the issues raised and a joint response. It had been confirmed that any new national management unit would be funded from Government revenues and not from fishery levies. | |
| 7.3 The Clerk reiterated that the deadline for responses to the latest consultation was 7 August and requested that Board members forward their views to him prior to this. The Clerk to prepare a Board response. | Clerk |
| 7.4 It was becoming increasingly clear that there will be fewer FMOs than current DSFBs and therefore amalgamation was very likely. ASFB was encouraging Boards to engage with a view to drawing up proposals for amalgamation, it being considered this was preferable to areas being imposed arbitrarily by Government. The Chairman reported that a meeting had been arranged with Ness DSFB on 23 July 2015 to investigate options. Andrew Wallace and Alastair Laing from RAFTS/ASFB had been invited to attend. | |
| 7.5 A suggestion that a joint Beauly/Ness/Lochaber area be proposed met with a mixed reception. | |
| 8 Financial Report – Year to date | |
| 8.1 The Clerk gave a brief summary of the Board's finances for the current year to 31 May. As no levy invoices had been raised, income to date was zero. Total expenditure to date was £2,439, primarily made up of subscription to ASFB, insurance premium costs and general accruals. Total cash at the bank as at the end of May 2015 was £21,068. | |
| 9 Enforcement and Bailiffing | |
| 9.1 Reports had been received of possible poaching on the River Beauly above Aigas dam. The Clerk was asked to report this to the proprietor of this beat, as well as the warranted bailiffs. | Clerk |
| 10 Any Other Business | |
| 10.1 The Board noted with sadness the death Diana McAndrew, who had been a prolific fisherwoman on the Beauly and had served a number of years as a Board member. A letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the Board to Nick McAndrew. | |
| 10.2 Frank Spencer-Nairn highlighted the forthcoming salmon festival to take place in Inverness in September. Beauly DSFB is noted as a supporting body and Frank Spencer-Nairn is on the steering group. | |
| 11 Date of next meeting | |
| 11.1 It was proposed that the next Board meeting take place on 3 December 2015 . | All |