

Minutes

RAFTS/ASFB Joint Working Group

13th Meeting: Birnam Institute, Birnam

14 April 2016

Present:

Andrew Wallace
Alasdair Laing (Chair)
Mark Bilsby
Brian Davidson
Nick Yonge
Simon McKelvey
Roger Knight
Marshall Halliday
Alison Baker
Jim Henderson
Roger Brook
Craig MacIntyre
Alan Wells

1. **Apologies for absence** (Jamie Ribbens)
2. **Minutes of last meeting & review of actions**

CLs (see also item 4) – this is now in hand through the established biologists group. JR has provided an update via email as below. Some gaps in representation are being addressed, and Lorraine Hawkins is taking this forward.

“Things have progressed recently. The ‘Marine Scotland and Local Fishery Biologist Liaison Group (MSLFBLG)’ has been set up which has various biologists on it who represent their local and surrounding Trusts/DSFBs e.g. I represent the GFT, Annan and Nith. Each member must liaise with the trusts/DSFBs in their area on various issues as they come up. Conservation Limits is part of the remit of the group and at the last meeting exactly how best for biologists to input to the process and what exactly to focus on was discussed and will involve working groups and draft discussions papers, etc – the minutes will be out soon describing the role of the group, how members are expected to engage / disseminate info wider and exactly what discussions were held at the first meeting. This group will be meeting once a month for the foreseeable future and includes representation from Trust/DSFB biologists, Marine Scotland

Science and the Scottish Government. The minutes will be out in the next few days. The Forth, Dee, Spey and the Conon were also there so they will be able to update the meeting tomorrow (14 April)".

Netting – It was agreed that a position on the longer term sustainability of netting should be considered. It was noted that the current measure will be reviewed 3 years from the date of introduction. The driver for the moratorium is the EU Habitats Directive. Sea trout can still be targeted and this presents ongoing issues for potential salmon by-catch. It is recognised that safe release of salmon caught as by catch can be difficult due to damage (especially in net and coble operations).

It was agreed that there may be need for co-ordination of ideas and actions in relation to exploitation in the future, and that this should be facilitated through ASFB. The matter of potential loss of rental income in the rod fishery was also mooted. Whilst it was too early to say whether there is evidence to suggest this is the case, it was agreed to air these at the next ASFB meeting. **ACTION: BD/AL**

3. Matters Arising

4. Conservation limits – update

It was noted that there is now a new group in place, as described in item 2. A template for conservation plans are being developed, however there is still a considerable way to go. The group presents an opportunity to get points from network across. The conservation plans will need 'agreement' with all Boards. The planning process will allow individual rivers to be assessed rather than at higher and less meaningful district level.

The two key work-streams are being undertaken through two groups, these are 1) focussing on the production and agreement of Conservation Plan templates, and 2) refining the conservation limit methodology data for local rivers.

5. ASFB / RAFTS Transition Working Group - report and next steps

The Group has met several times and is looking at how ASFB and RAFTS functions might operate in a more co-ordinated way moving forward. The Group comprises the following members:

Andrew Wallace
Alasdair Laing
Roger Brook
Melanie Smith
Alister Jack
Roger Knight

A draft 'ideas' paper has been circulated, which RAFTS has discussed and ASFB will be discussing. The aim is to put recommendations together for both ASFB and RAFTS boards' agreement. There will also be a need for the membership to discuss and agree a way forward for ASFB and RAFTS during the transitional period.

6. Update on progress with WFR

6.1 Update from ScotGov – Alan Wells

There has been engagement with a wide range of individuals and organisations. For example, most recently this has included presentations at the bailiff's conference and meetings with the Crown Office (regarding offences). The latter discussions have looked at a range of matters, including alternative means of prosecution, bailiff warranting and offence levels. All these matters, and others, are necessitating ongoing discussion at different levels and departments with Scottish Government and agencies.

The current consultation has generated 150 responses so far. The provision which provides a criminal offence of fishing without protection is generating some interest. The current PO system provides for access and protection, but these are not necessarily linked or complementary to each other. Access is an issue which could generate considerable interest.

It would be useful to begin to start assessing the resources required to support FMOs on an area by area basis. This could, for example, map out such resources by what is actually needed rather than configured around current and accepted incoming resources.

It was agreed to provide information on projected staff resources (with appropriate range in costs) to deliver fishery management. This will be developed through a template (based on the functions/roles discussed/agreed by the River Director's Group). **ACTION: BD/AWa/AL**

Directors' paper referred to above to be provided: **ACTION: RK**

OSCR paper on charitable functions (discussed at previous meeting) to be circulated/linked once it is available via the Stakeholder Reference Group. **ACTION: AWe**

6.2 Stakeholder Reference Group – update

Status of approved papers – these are now on the website – see [HERE](#)

Pilot FMO programme – It was noted that there are some areas prepared to move forward. The question about resources to support this process was raised. This will come up for discussion when the sector and Scottish Government meet to consider way forward with pilots. There is also the scope to investigate third sector funding to help with the process.

6.3 Wild Fisheries (Scotland) Bill/Strategy consultation.

BD provided an update on the process to date. The draft response had been developed further and circulated to the membership and JWG. It had been informed by feedback at the member's workshop in March and by individual member submissions. The Bailiff Development Group had provided input to the enforcement questions. The draft would be circulated again to the membership for final views before submission at the end of the month. **ACTION: BD**

6.4 Updates on:

Functions and powers – There is scope for improved alignment between local and national management – this should include Government field stations and local management. Discussions around the form and function of the proposed National Unit are ongoing, more time is required to assess the direction this will take. Views will be sought from the sector.

Enforcement & compliance – The Bailiff Development Group is helping to feed in ideas to matters relating to enforcement. A new Stakeholder Group is being formed to look at this and invitations will be extended to the sector to propose representatives. This will also include wider interests, ie Crown Office, National Wildlife Crime Unit etc.

7. Communications

Issuing agenda to wider membership – The JWG agenda was circulated to the membership to ensure that they are sighted on the discussions, and to feed in comments via the JWG representatives. This was done, and there had been no feedback. It was agreed to continue to do this. **ACTION: BD**

Impact of WFR on staff time/resources – NY raised a point about the impact the WFR process is having on the available time of contributors and the increasing demands on time required to serve on groups, attend meetings etc. This was widely accepted and recognised, but solution is not obvious - need to accept the importance of WFR and the opportunity to influence change.

8. Any other business

Title of bill – It was agreed to consider whether the title of the bill was suitable, or whether an alternative should be suggested - consider further. **ACTION: ALL**

9. Date of next meeting

25 May 2016, 10.00