

Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Management Report

www.sffm.org.uk [Website usable but under development]



Welcome to the New Look Report

Welcome to the new look **Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Management Report**. In June this year we sent out a questionnaire with our last 'blue report' asking readers to tell us what they thought of the report and how it could be improved. As well as cleaning up and refining the mailing list we also gathered from readers that they were largely content with the content and form of the report which was reassuring. It seems that it does what we largely set out for it do – namely distil as much important information and reporting of fisheries related news into as small a space as possible so that busy but interested people can keep an eye on what is going on in a simple and digestible format at least three times a year. However, one key theme that has come through relates to the various newsletters and fliers that we include with the report and people have questioned why ASFB/ RAFTS and IFM do not condense all their information into one possibly slightly expanded report, produced possibly more often. This

seems to make particular sense for organisations that are all in their respective ways dealing with fisheries management issues. We have taken note of this and have attempted, with this issue, to do this and we will gradually refine this over time as well as working on expanding the mailing list which currently stands at about 1200.

These reports will also be published on the RAFTS/ ASFB and IFM websites and work is going on on the RAFTS/ASFB website at present with a view to creating a 'virtual' fisheries centre which will provide a useful information resource for all those involved in fisheries management in Scotland – www.sffm.org.uk. This is being developed as a donation by a web site company called Aspira details of which are below and we are extremely grateful to them for their support. We hope you enjoy this modified format and we would welcome any further comments as to how the report and the website might be improved.

In this edition

Scottish 2005 salmon catch – 5th biggest on record. But sea-trout failing to keep up

SEERAD and Freshwater Fisheries forum start work on Strategic Framework for Scottish Freshwater Fisheries

RAFTS & ASFB develop joint 'Guide to Best Practice'

Irish Drift Nets Off in 2007

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Scottish Salmon Catches 2005

In September SEERAD produced the 2005 statistical bulletin which showed that 2005 was the 5th best salmon catch in the time series which started in 1952. Spring salmon catches showed a steady increase as did catch and release rates with 55% of salmon and grilse returned overall and 65% of spring fish returned during the season. This is very positive news and reflects the discriminating nature of policies and the wish and ability to target stock exploitation control measures at specific problems.

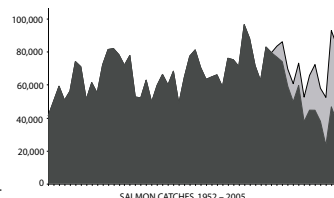
It is interesting to note that the Environment Agency, which adopted a statutory requirement to release all rod caught fish before mid June, is now considering a catchment by catchment approach to exploitation control such as that which we have in Scotland. However, the Scottish policy of voluntary restraint has its downside and there remain 'black spots' on the Scottish catchment map with certain rivers and some individual beats failing to implement policies and control anglers. Such situations leave Boards only one option – namely to apply to Ministers for a statutory instrument under the

Salmon Conservation Act which can be time-consuming, controversial and locally divisive. Such policies are also difficult to enforce. Anglers and proprietors are therefore urged to take the necessary steps to comply with voluntary policies or face the consequences.

A further area of concern is over sea-trout stocks which have shown a fairly steady decline in recent years. Whilst the population dynamics of sea-trout are less well understood it is clear from their biology that, if anything, invest-

ment in catch and release policies for sea-trout will pay greater dividends because they are more likely to be repeat spawners. It is therefore actually illogical that we have robust C&R policies for salmon the stocks of which appear to be moderate to good in most places, yet we have very much poorer C&R rates on sea-trout stocks which not only seem to be much more scarce but which stand to benefit much more from these policies.

The ASFB is about to embark on a drive this year to improve the conservation policies for sea-trout in 2007. Copies of the **Scottish Executive Statistical Bulletin** can be obtained from FRS on: 01796 472060



Aquaculture & Freshwater Fisheries Bill

The Environment and Rural Development Committee has now finished taking oral evidence from stakeholders and Freshwater Fish and the ASFB and RAFTS submitted supplementary evidence to the Committee by the deadline of 25th October and gave evidence to the Committee on 1st November. The main thrust of the discussion was to challenge assertions made by previous witnesses that regulatory control of sea-lice and escapes was an unnecessary regulatory burden.

Our arguments have been assisted by the representative body of the industry itself which has cautiously welcomed the Bill. Sid Patten of SSPO giving evidence on the 4th Oct stated: "The proposed containment measures in the Bill are not unhelpful, but they merely reflect the practices and protocols that the industry has had in place for some time..." and that with reference to sea lice... the Bill provides the correct backstop for people who do not apply the proper regimes and protocols that are important to manage the problem...".

We are grateful to SSPO for this sensible analysis of the way the Bill will work and will be urging MSPs not to challenge proposals that have the support of both the industry and wild fish interests. Most of the proposals relating to freshwater legislation remain relatively uncontroversial and

we are pleased to see measures being put in place to control *G. salaris* and to control fish movements in Scotland which are currently subject to minimal controls. The latter we hope will help prevent the spread of non native fish species throughout the Scottish freshwater network. The Stage 2 debate in Parliament, held on the 20th Dec, confirmed that most MSPs seem to be supportive of the principles and much of the detail of the Bill which is encouraging and a testament to the hard work of the Fisheries Forum.

Irish Drift Net Buy-Out

In the late Autumn the Irish Government finally capitulated and accepted the recommendations of the Independent Working Group on Salmon for a compulsory buy-out of all Irish drift netting licenses. An estimated 68,000 salmon will return to natal rivers in 2007 as a result – many of them destined for English, Welsh, Scottish and Southern European rivers. This is a triumph for Niall Greene's Stop Salmon Drift Nets Now campaign and those other organisations who have been relentlessly applying pressure on the Irish Government, over many years, to close the biggest remaining mixed salmon fishery left. The campaign has been underwritten by EU legislation under the Habitats Directive and strong arguments about the impacts of the effects of such indiscriminate fisheries on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for Atlantic salmon.

Strategic Framework for SFSFF

This initiative that has emerged from discussion within the Freshwater Forum is effectively a planning process for the next 5-10 years and will set out a series of 'Priorities for Action' In effect this will be a wish list of issues that need attending to. These will be presented in a Strategic Framework which will be consulted on and published this year and will identify actions, responsible bodies, time scales for actions and costs. Anybody who wishes to feed ideas into this process should do so through RAFTS or ASFB over coming months. The open meeting for the Forum is to be rescheduled – date to be advised.

Viral Haemorrhagic Septicaemia (VHS)

In August DEFRA announced that the zone of control for fish movements that resulted from the VHS outbreak was to be reduced to the River Ouse catchment area. As a result of this the current suspension of approved zone status for GB was lifted, with the exception of this area. Assessments suggest that there was only a low risk of the spread of VHS to other parts of the UK although there is still no news on the origin of the outbreak.

ASFB Association of Salmon Fisheries Boards

Guide to Best Practice

RAFTS and ASFB have set up a joint working group for the Executive Committees of each organisation which is working on a Guide to Best Practice for Boards and Trusts. This will govern how Boards and Trusts conduct their business and how they work with each other. We hope this will go some way to clearly defining the different but complementary roles of Boards and Trusts and of RAFTS and ASFB. The Guide is currently being considered by both bodies before being agreed and published in early 2007.

Catch Data SI

The long awaited catch data statutory instrument has been in force since January 1st. This SI will give Boards the power to collect catch data direct from proprietors up to a maximum of twice a year. This will enable Boards to make early assessments of spring and annual catch each year and tailor policies accordingly. A briefing on the implications of this regulation is shortly to be sent to all Fishery Boards.

Gyrodactylus Salaris

In mid December SEERAD published the GS Contingency Plan, Economic Impact Report

and GS Task Force Chair's Report. These can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Fisheries/Fish-Shellfish/18610/13929>

The ASFB will now start work with Fishery Boards and Trusts to ensure that the recommendations are actioned for the 2007 season. Attention will focus on measures to prevent GS getting in to Scottish rivers, however, the contingency planning process will prove essential should GS be identified in the UK.

Strathy Netting Station

The Scottish Executive owned lease at Strathy is up for renewal in 2007 and, as one of the last major mixed stock fisheries left in Scotland, considerable pressure is being brought to bear to ensure that the lease is terminated. The ASFB has a clear position on interceptory netting for salmon and believes that it is impossible to logically or equitably manage salmon stocks whilst fisheries remain that take fish from more than one natal river. This argument lies behind the closure of the High Seas Fisheries, the North East Drift Net Fishery and the recent decision over the Irish Drift Net Fishery. Lending further weight to the argument is that all these fisheries, Strathy included, have an impact on sites designated as SACs for salmon under the Habitats Directive.

Negotiations are underway with SEERAD and a letter from all the major angling bodies and fisheries organisations has been sent to the Deputy Minister, Rhona Brankin.

Annual Bailiffs' Seminar

For the future, it has been agreed in principle to rotate the Annual Bailiffs' Seminar around different rivers in Scotland so that we can focus on particular local issues relevant to each area. We are hoping to run the 2007 event in Inverness-shire, with a particular theme to be agreed. This will hopefully make the event interesting and useful, with the possibility of building practical events and field visits into the programme. More details will follow early in 2007.

Conflict Resolution Training

The Dee Board, with support from the ASFB, ran a very useful course in the summer with the training consultancy Mearns & Angus. The general feeling is that this was extremely relevant and helpful to bailiffs and others who are out in the field and where there is potential for situations to arise. If there is sufficient demand ASFB will co-ordinate a further course in 2007 – please let Brian Davidson know if you are interested.

'Trout in the Classroom'

The 'Trout in the Classroom' educational programme run by the Clyde River Foundation for primary schools in the River Forth catchment has won an award in the Clackmannanshire Council Provost Awards 2006. Jean McMillan presented the School/Business Partnership 'Determined to Succeed' award to the Clyde River Foundation. This was the first time this award has been presented in Clackmannanshire. The Clyde River Foundation also runs the 'Clyde in the Classroom' education programme with around 80 primary schools from Glasgow and the surrounding areas participating every year. Many other Fisheries Trusts run similar education programmes, which originally started with the 'Salmon in the Classroom' programme that was pioneered by Galloway Fisheries Trust. These programmes aim to encourage children to take an active role in conserving their local rivers and introduce pupils to river ecology and biodiversity. Web: www.snh.org.uk/salmonintheclassroom

Support for Fundraising

RAFTS' members are in constant need of external funding in order to progress their aims and objectives. RAFTS provides fundraising, representation and operational support to its members but, with a growing membership, additional resources are needed to carry out the fundraising that is urgently required. Rather than employing a dedicated project officer to perform the fundraising role RAFTS has secured funding for the relevant expertise to be contracted into the organisation to assist in building the funding capacity of its members.

We are pleased to announce that Luke Comins of the Tweed Forum will be contracted for 2 days per week to work with RAFTS and its members. Luke has extensive experience in the field of project development and fundraising amongst which has been the development and delivery of the Tweed Rivers Heritage Project, a £9 million scheme aiming to conserve and enhance the natural built and cultural heritage of the Tweed and its catchments.

Management Planning

Contracts with Fisheries Research Services have now been successfully commissioned and approximately £600k has been made available over the next 2 years to develop all species fisheries management plans throughout Scotland. These plans will provide information that will inform management planning and guidance and policy development on a wider scale. RAFTS will be working with the Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre (SFCC) to develop the planning process which will be aligned with the 6 year cycle of planning

of the Water Framework Directive. This will ensure fisheries management planning forms an important part of the catchment management planning process.

RAFTS & SFCC Road Shows

RAFTS and the SFCC will be carrying out a number of regional road shows across Scotland in 2007 to deliver information on fisheries management planning and the activities of the Area Advisory Groups (AAG) which have been established by SEPA for the Water Framework Directive. These will be regional meetings open to all freshwater fisheries interests. Dates and venues will be confirmed on the website (www.rafts.org.uk). RAFTS will, with the ASFB, also be holding a meeting of all AAG representatives at the Dewar Centre on 23rd January. The purpose of the meeting will be to co-ordinate our various regional responses to the AAG process and feed ideas up to the National Advisory Group which has now been established and on which fisheries interest are represented by Andrew Wallace. Details from Brian Davidson, email: asfb@btconnect.com

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

An alien species control project will be submitted to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation for funding in January 2007. The project includes participation from Trusts across Scotland and covers non-native fish and plant species.

Diary Dates

JANUARY

- 23rd** WFD Area Advisory Group (Dewars, Perth)
- 23rd** RAFTS Area Advisory Group Representatives Meeting
- 24th** RAFTS Executive Committee Meeting
- 25th** Fisheries Forum – postponed

FEBRUARY

- 19th** ASFB Council (Dewars, Perth)

MARCH

- 8th** RAFTS AGM
- 9th** RAFTS Conference
- Mid** Bailiffs Conference (2 days, TBA)
- 14th** Fisheries Forum – postponed
- 27th** Angling Tourism Development Group (TBA)

APRIL

- 24th** ASFB AGM/Council

AUGUST

- 7th** ASFB Council (Dewars, Perth)

IFM Development Officer

The Institute of Fishery Management, with ASFB and RAFTS and supported by LANTRA, are in the final stages of drawing together the contract for the post of Development Officer. This will be a national position based in Scotland of which one of the key objectives will be to co-ordinate the many disparate fishery training initiatives which are at various stages in Scotland.

The Officer, will, of course, have other IFM-specific duties, but this will provide a solution to the long-standing problem with training development, co-ordination and provision for fisheries in Scotland. The post will be given significant support from Lantra, the agency responsible for promoting training within the land-based industries in the UK, where the Officer will be based and will have access to significant resources.

It is hoped that the Officer will, as one of the priorities, embark on a systematic survey of training needs within the Scottish fisheries sector, and offer practical solutions to the requirements which are identified. It is hoped that the position will be advertised early this year, although this will depend on finalising all details relating to the contract and agreement between all sponsoring parties

Bailiff Training Module

The bailiff training course is now well established through the partnership between IFM and ASFB. The course counts as one unit towards the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 2 course in fisheries management, and serves as a useful and practical building block for those who wish to embark further on this SVQ. It is also a mandatory entrance qualification for those who are appointed by the Fishery Boards to exercise the powers of water bailiffs.

The next examination sitting for the module will be in March 2007 – further details will be posted in due course. If you require more details of the course, please contact Brian Davidson.

Guide Training Proposal

Work is well underway to devise a training programme for angling guides in Scotland. This project is supported by the Angling Tourism Development Group – a collaboration between fishery management and angling groups, and public sector agencies, primarily VisitScotland and Scottish Enterprise. A small Working Group will develop the course content and consider how it can be promoted, although the proposed course will not cover angling instruction.

The aim is to produce a formal qualification, accredited with the SQA, and forms part of an initiative to develop better angling tourism. It is hoped that a pilot course may be run in 2007. Further details from Brian Davidson (IFM Scottish Secretary).

PACEC report

A report by PACEC supported by BASC, Game Conservancy, Countryside Alliance and the Country Land & Business Association has valued shooting sports in Scotland at £240m supporting 11000 jobs. This was part of an assessment valuing shooting as being worth £1.6 billion to the UK economy, supporting 70000 FTE jobs. Given the SEERAD report in 2003 valued angling at £113m supporting 2800 jobs, and given that it is widely thought that angling is a bigger employer and revenue generator than shooting, this highlights the problems of using different methodologies when assessing these values. It seems likely that angling under the PACEC assessment methodology would be given an even greater value. A re-evaluation of the value of angling may therefore now be important. However, both reports highlight the value of fieldsports to the Scottish rural economy.

Bergen Symposium

Interactions Between Aquaculture and Wild Stocks of Atlantic Salmon: Challenges & Solutions – the report of the symposium, held in October, has now been published. Copies are available from NASCO. Tel: 0131 228 2551. Email: hq@nasco.int

River Tweed Blog

For those who find only occasional contact with the River Tweed an insufficient fix, a new weblog has been established. To get the best out of it you need to subscribe or create a reader account at www.rivertweed.org.uk This will give you access to daily news from the River Tweed Commissioners and the Tweed Foundation.

Salmon Viewing Centre

The new salmon viewing centre at Philiphaugh on the Ettrick (tributary of the River Tweed) is well worth a visit. A Tweed Forum initiative and part of the Tweed's Heritage Lottery Fund project, the centre enables visitors to watch live footage of salmon underwater as well as leaping the cauld. It is at the Old Mill Farm on the Philiphaugh Estate just outside Selkirk. Follow the A708 towards Moffat and look for the signs.

ACA Annual Report

The Anglers' Conservation Association has just produced its Annual Report, included in which is an article on the

work we have been doing with them on re-establishing their presence in Scotland. Most of the preparatory work is complete and a Scottish steering group has been established which will take these ideas forward. A formal launch of the ACA in Scotland early in 2007 will be followed by a big recruitment drive. In the meantime those interested should either contact the ACA or visit their website: <http://www.a-c-a.org/>. Email: admin@a-c-a.org Tel: 01568 620447

AST Auction

The Atlantic Salmon Trust are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year and are, as usual, holding an auction with a wide range of sporting lots. The Postal Auction booklet is now out and details can be obtained from Jenny Sample, tel: 01796 473439 or www.atlanticsalmontrust.org

SFFM Report Mailing List

In the process of producing this combined report it is possible that people will be sent more than one copy. We are in the process of sorting out the mailing list at present and apologise for any duplications.

Implementing The WEWS (Scotland) Act 2003: Diffuse Water Pollution from Rural Land Use

Organisation Scottish Executive Environment Group

Deadline: 10 JANUARY 2007

Reply: waterdivision@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Copies: waterdivision@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Issue: Consultation on general binding rules that might be appropriate to control diffuse pollution in Scottish freshwater and coastal regions

Scottish Marine National Park

Organisation SEERAD

Deadline: 10 JANUARY 2007

Reply: cmnpconsultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Copies: www.scotland.gov.uk/CMNPConsultation

Issue: marine national park

The way forward for the enforcement of environmental law

Organisation SEERAD / Environmental Futures Division

Deadline: 22 FEBRUARY 2007

Reply: brian.mcgarra@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Copies: Brian McGarry

Issue: Wide ranging paper on how to improve environmental legislation, not by creating new laws but by making and enforcing existing ones better.

Reports

West Sutherland Fisheries Trust	Annual Report 2006	Copy: shona@wsft.demon.co.uk
Shieldaig Sea Trout Project Review	Annual Report 2005/6	Copy: Jim Raffell, Tel: 01520 722304 www.frs-scotland.gov.uk
Galloway Fisheries Trust	Annual Report 2006	Copy: mail@gallowayfisheriestrust.org www.gallowayfisheriestrust.org
River Dee Stock Component Review	Summary report 2006	Copy: Mark Bilsby mark@riverdee.org
Forth Fisheries Foundation	Annual Report 2005-6	Tel: 01786 841015
Ayrshire Rivers Trust	Annual Report, to end Jan '06	Copy: info@ayrshireriverstrust.org
Fisheries Committee	Annual Report March 2006	http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Fisheries/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/17604/9140
Scottish Salmon & Sea-Trout Catches 2005	Annual Bulletin	FRS Tel: 01796 472060
Forestry Commission	Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006	www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland Tel: 0131 314 6156
NASCO	Report of Annual Meeting at Saariselkä, Finland	www.nasco.int Tel: 0131 228 2551
River Basin Planning Framework	Framework Plan Solway/Tweed	www.sepa.org.uk/wfd/rbmp Tel: 01786 457700
Tay District Salmon Fishery Board	Annual Report 2005/6	Copy: d.summers@btinternet.com Tel: 01738 583733