

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at Cromwell park, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 9th April 2019.

Present: Simon Furniss
David Godfrey
Steve Mannion
Claire Mercer Nairne
Jim Perrett (Vice Chairman)
Mike Smith
Alec Stewart
Cohn O’Dea (TGA rep)
Allister Wallace

In Attendance: Inga MacGillivray - Clerk
Dr. David Summers - Fisheries Director
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Parrott
David Brown
Iain McLaren (Convener)
Tom Monaghan
Brian Roxburgh (SEPA)

JP explained that the Convener had tendered his apologies and had asked him to stand in as Acting Convener for the meeting.

1. Stuart Middlemass Presentation

JP stated that Stuart Middlemass would be unable to make his presentation due to other commitments.

2. Apologies

ACTION: IMacG to send letter of appreciation to Councillor Bob Band for his hard work with the Board.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

4. Minutes from Meeting held 12th February 2019

The Minutes were then taken as being read, agreed unanimously and signed by the Acting Convener.

5. Matters Arising

Craig Somerville Presentation

ACTION: IMacG/AW to ensure Craig Somerville gives presentation to TRT at next meeting.

Datta Fishing Report

ALL agreed the fishing report was good and DS pointed out that the reports required to be archived.

ACTION: DS to liaise with Dattas & CMN re archiving reports.

Eden

DS explained that he was meeting with a representative of the Eden Angling Association the following week to discuss broodstock collection amongst other things, and that the Ranunculus drone study had been thwarted by inclement weather but was still to be done in the near future.

ACTION: DS to examine possibilities for Eden Angling Association to help with broodstock collection on the Eden.

ACTION: DS to ensure Ranunculus study carried out on Eden by TDSFB drone later in the Spring.

Luncarty Weir

DS explained that he had taken photos downstream of the weir and sent them to SEPA, but he thought the staged tiers downstream of the weir were unlikely to be feasible, which left the option of digging out upstream. He had been contacted by a local landowner who was keen to see work done.

ACTION: DS to update at next meeting.

Budget

JP explained that there had been some discussion surrounding wage increases since the last meeting and asked that IMacG & DS left the room so the Board could finalise the increase and therefore the budget.

(IMacG & DS left the room)

Board discussed wage increase.

(IMacG & DS entered the room)

JP stated that the Board had agreed a 3% wage increase for all employees, and that this would be reviewed for the 2020 budget by a couple of Board members in conjunction with IMacG.

ACTION: IMacG to run through 2020 budget with DG/CMN and one other Board member when appropriate.

Steve Mannion paper

SM gave a brief description of information he had gleaned from a meeting with the Operations Manager and the work of the Fisheries Officers. He was very complimentary about the hard work put in by all involved. He finished by saying the point of his paper was not for the Board to interfere with the work of the staff but for them to understand and be spokespeople for the work carried out by the staff. He reminded everyone of the various groups which were:

Admin: IMacG – AP & JP
Conservation: DS – MS, AS & CMN
Enforcement: MB/Fisheries Officers – SM, SF & DG
Hatchery: SK – DB, C'OD & TM
TRT: IMacL & AW

MS thanked SM for the information.

6. Budget & Road Update

IMacG gave a brief financial summary of the cash account to 2nd April 2019 and explained the larger numbers and variances. She then went on to give an update on the road situation, with the proviso that the information given be kept between Board members until instructed otherwise.

7. Health & Safety Report

DS stated that there had been no H&S incidents since the last Board meeting.

8. TDSFB Plan for the Future

DS had previously circulated a paper which outlined the top ten projects the Board had collectively chosen to prioritise. He then proceeded to present the paper to the Board.

1. Bird Predation

After much discussion it was agreed that it would be beneficial to gather more evidence of bird numbers to give the Board a better idea and to inform SNH. In addition to the current Fisheries Officer counts, it was agreed to organise monthly counts in as many areas as possible to build up a picture. The following actions were agreed:

ACTION: DS to organise for the Operations Manager or one of the Fisheries Officers to become the point of contact for all bird counts and to liaise with ghillies and other volunteers to organise a bird count every month (or twice a month)

ACTION: AS to obtain feedback on whether this type of count could be extended upwards of the Tummel junction, and if so, to feed in to Operations Manager/Fisheries Officer.

ACTION: JP to obtain feedback on whether this could also be carried out on the Earn

ACTION: DS has already spoken to SNH regarding extending licence to May to include male goosanders – DS to carry this forward.

10. Piscivorous Bird Licence – Firearms or Shotgun

This point had been brought up in the Open Meeting held in March. DG led the discussion stating that in the past the Board had agreed on shotguns due to safety issues, but as the discussion continued it became clear that most Board members were in favour of firearms being used where appropriate.

ACTION: IMaL/DG/C'OD to identify areas and gunholders on the river where firearms would be suitable/appropriate and report back at next Board meeting with recommendations as to a way forward.

2. Water Abstraction

DS explained that SEPA had proposed changes to the Ericht abstraction, but DS had opposed these and been dismissed. However, he did not think the problem would be so great in future but was not wholly convinced the new regime would solve all the issues. SEPA is to review of the changes made in November 2019. DS stated that more facts were required to inform this review. To this end, he had instructed the Operations Manager to gather evidence of smolt movement using Go Pro cameras and floodlights. DG suggested using waterproof infrared cameras as he had used before and found them to be helpful

ACTION: DG to liaise with Operations Manager regarding use of waterproof infrared cameras.

DS concluded that the abstraction issue was now better than it was but had ongoing issues to contend with.

Regarding the Lochay abstraction, AS suggested a site visit and a discussion with SSE, whilst DS stated that it is SEPA who would have to be convinced of the issues, as it was the abstraction regulator. DS explained the history of the Lochay abstraction and why it did not fit conventionally within SEPA's waterbody categorisation system. The following was agreed:

ACTION: AS/CMN/MS to arrange a site visit to put a fresh "pair of eyes" on the problem.

ACTION: DS to continue discussions with SEPA

3. Shochie Weir Removal

Covered under Matters Arising.

4. Beavers

It was noted that beavers were now protected as a European Protected Species, and that licences could be issued for their control to accredited controllers. A brief discussion ensued though no action points were noted.

5. **Stocking**

C'OD asked for an overview on stocking as he and others had noticed a distinct lack of spawning on the main stem of the river.

(SM left the meeting)

ACTION: DS to set up focus group to review stocking policy and report back to the Board.

ACTION: DS to arrange for drone to do redd survey on main stem

DS noted that Marine Scotland had conducted a review of stocking and were proposing to take stocking powers away from district fisheries boards and put them in the hands of Marine Scotland. C'OD asked if this would affect the hatchery facility to which DS replied that we had to apply for broodstock fishing licences anyway so would expect little to change in this area.

6. **Riverworks**

After a short discussion CMN agreed her forestry team could do the necessary riverworks on the Lunan with no financial contribution from the Board.

ACTION: CMN to arrange with forestry team to carry out works on south bank of Lunan.

7. **Monitoring the River Garry flow restoration**

DS explained that the UHI had provided some genetic typing information on the project and this had been conveyed at the Open Meeting. Basically, in addition to hatchery fish present, wild salmon had also spawned in the Garry in 2017 which was very encouraging.

In the near future, UHI will provide a more detailed report which may be added to the website in due course.

MS asked for an update on the Falls of Clunes to see if it is monitored.

ACTION: DS to provide update on Falls of Clunes for next meeting.

8. **Biosecurity**

There was some discussion surrounding crayfish and their spread with DG stating that he had picked up crayfish in the Almond last year.

ACTION: JP to contact SNH re licencing for crayfish trapping later in the year.

9. **Invasive Plants**

DS explained that the SISI project was covering the eastern/north eastern half of the district regarding invasive species, and JP confirmed he had access to a 50% grant to cover invasives work in the Dunning area.

10. **Fish Counters**

DS explained that Marine Scotland were keen to use fish counters to calibrate their model, but that only certain rivers had the necessary conditions to house a fish counter. He was not sure that there was anywhere really suitable to be of much help to Marine Scotland except perhaps the Almond.

He added that in the past there had been talks to put a counter on the Errochty but this might affect the use of an SSE gauging weir

MS asked if we could use the old Erich fish counter to get a handle on spawning in Low's Works Dyke on the Almond, to which DS replied it may be of use but the problem was the counter we have is old and a modern one would be better. Notwithstanding this, the counter would require electrodes positioned along the full width of the river.

There was further discussion on the matter with no actions decided.

9. Electrofishing Report

DS had previously circulated a report which was taken as read. AS asked if anything had been done on the Fillan, to which DS replied that studies had been done on the Fillan and Shochie and that the Fillan consistently showed good results.

11. Piscivorous Bird Licence – Firearms or Shotgun

Matter covered under 8. TDSFB Plan for the Future (1.) Bird Predation

12. AOB

Pike Predation

MS drew the Board's attention to a pike predation issue in Alexander Creek in Alaska, which had supported a thriving fishing community at one point until pike were introduced and wiped out the other species.

MS pointed out that vast numbers of pike could be found in the Tummel and Faskally and on his beat at Burnmouth. He wanted to make the Board aware that this could be a potential problem.

ACTION: Pike Predation to be revisited at next Board meeting – IMacG to put on agenda.

There were no further items, and the Acting Convener thanked the Board for attending, and closed the meeting.