

CAITHNESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 26 AUGUST 2014

Present:	Viscount Thurso (Chair) Earl of Caithness Sir Richard Dunbar	John Mackay (Vice Chair) Anson MacAuslan Tertius Threipland	Simon Laird Roddy Willis Tom Stitt
In attendance:	Eddie McCarthy	Alan Youngson	Eleanor Constable
Members of the public:	Hamish Sutherland		
Apologies:	Ian Cormack		

Register of Interests

NTR

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters arising from previous meetings

NTR

Admin and Finance

- Expenditure

Expenditure to date was in line with the budget for the year.

- Permissions

There was a brief review of the activities which require authorisation from the Board and the associated procedures.

Hatcheries: Applications received from the Dunbeath, Wick and Thurso rivers for the continued operation of hatcheries were approved.

Stocking requests: Conditions for approval were to be investigated before the next meeting. For future years stocking requests are to be a standing item on the agenda of the Board's summer meeting.

Action: Clerk

Electrofishing: With requests for electrofishing surveys coming from within and outwith the District it was agreed that arrangements for approval should be regularised. Conditions for undertaking surveys are to be proscribed and the Board and relevant proprietors supplied with survey findings on completion. The Consultant was asked to produce a policy to cater for this for publication on the Board's website.

Action: Consultant

- Consultations

Activity for the period June to August was noted. Mr Mackay requested a copy of the baseline fisheries assessment commissioned by the developer of the proposed windfarm at Cnoc Morail, Watten.

Action: Clerk

Consultant's Report

The Consultant raised a number of points for the Board's attention.

- Archiving

The storage and availability of accumulated material for future research was becoming a matter of concern with time. It was noted that the Rivers Trust was currently looking into the possibility of establishing an archive for its own purposes and it was hoped that this could serve as a common repository for information of interest to both organisations. The Board would be kept informed.

- Scottish Government consultation on statutory measures to protect spring salmon

A consultation had been announced recently with plans for statutory measures to come into effect next year. The Board agreed to maintain its policy of not taking a position on such matters and that it was for individual proprietors and other members to make their views known independently. Mr Youngson offered his assistance if anyone wished to discuss the scientific issues before forming an opinion.

- ERI workshop on monitoring migratory salmonids in the Moray Firth rivers

The Environmental Research Institute was to hold a Pentland Salmon Initiative workshop to consider monitoring arrangements in the context of marine renewables, specifically for the Moray Firth rivers. It would provide an opportunity for stakeholders, including policy makers, developers and DSFBs/Trusts, to identify their needs in safeguarding salmonid populations and the means to do so. The Board considered this in light of its own approach and proposals for monitoring and conveyed its thoughts to Mr Mackay and Mr MacAuslan to take with them to the workshop, which they planned to attend on behalf of both the CDSFB and the Flow Country Rivers Trust.

Action: Mr Mackay/Mr MacAuslan

Electrofishing Survey 2014

Preparations were in place for a repeat of the 2013 survey to take place during the first half of September. The Board was prepared to underwrite fieldwork with the collecting of samples in order for the project to get underway but research aspects might have to be delayed pending availability of further funding. [Following the meeting it was confirmed that the Crown Estate had agreed to co-sponsor the project with a contribution of £9k which would cover the costs of the fieldwork, and the plan is now expected to be implemented in full.]

Mr Youngson would be in charge of the survey again this year, but expressed the hope that after two consecutive years some of the younger members of the team would be sufficiently experienced to manage collection without him for future surveys.

River Improvements Committee

The Committee was currently preoccupied with the forthcoming EF survey. There had been no formal meetings during the last quarter.

Flow Country Rivers Trust

Mr Laird confirmed that the Trust was now established and productive. For future feedback it was decided that there should be a standing entry under Admin on the agenda to cater for occasions when there were matters to discuss. As and when there was anything specific to report back from Trust meetings Mr Laird was asked to provide a note to go out with the Clerk's report.

Any other business

The Chairman informed the Board that two complaints had been received from Usan Salmon Fisheries Ltd. These were being investigated in accordance with Board procedure.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for late November, date to be agreed. Consideration was to be given to online scheduling of future meeting dates.