

## Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre Management Committee Meeting – Minutes

**26 May 2021**

10:30 – 12:15

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence.**

#### **In attendance:**

Marcus Walters – Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (chair)

Sean Robertson – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Alan Wells – Fisheries Management Scotland

Sean Dugan – Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre

John Armstrong – Marine Scotland Science

#### **Apologies:**

Kjersti Birkland – SEPA

Jamie Ribbens – Galloway Fisheries Trust

Joanna Girvan – Forth Rivers Trust

James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation

Antje Branding – Marine Scotland

MW welcomed attendees and provided apologies for those with other commitments including ongoing fieldwork, fish rescues, swift water training and interviews. MW stood in as chair in the absence of JG and introduced the wider discussion around SFCC staff resilience (see item 3 below).

### **2. 10:35: Minutes of previous meeting, review of action points and matters arising.**

#### **2.1. November 25 meeting**

All action points, largely relating to Biologists' meeting planning have been taken forward. Proposed SFCC objectives for 2021-22 to be developed in advance and discussed during the annual member's meeting. The member's meeting held in late March was very well attended generating lots of feedback and discussion. Members felt that after the salmon pressures project was delivered, Sean's focus should be on the creation of mobile/tablet field data collection tools using ESRI software.

#### **2.2. March 9 members' meeting**

**SD to circulate updated electrofishing manuals to all SFCC members in a secure way.** Final updates currently being made in advance of training courses running this summer and manuals will be circulated thereafter.

**SD to communicate feedback relating to invertebrate protocol development to Craig MacAdam and arrange a Teams call as required.** Member feedback was provided to Craig and Craig is currently working on the protocol and associated training course. Committee enquired as to where invertebrate data was to be stored and how this might be determined by the purpose of the data collection. An overarching index of fish food per unit time is a key requirement for fisheries assessment, with invertebrate diversity required more for water quality assessment.

**ACTION: SR and SD to discuss invertebrate data storage with Craig MacAdam.**

### **3. 10:40: SFCC staff resilience and points of contact**

#### **3.1. Chair/ vice-chair**

Committee took the opportunity to discuss the appointment of a vice-chair position for SFCC. The principal of having a vice-chair supported by all.

**ACTION: Nominations for a vice-chair to be circulated to management committee by correspondence.**

#### **3.2. Sean Dugan Paternity Leave (~July/August 2021)**

SD shared the news of the imminent arrival of a baby, with the intention to take time off in mid-late July. The summer months are usually a relatively quiet time of the year for SFCC correspondence with members, but committee discussed setting up basic points of contact in advance. The key areas of correspondence are general enquiries, SFCC's training programme, mapping/field data collection and the database. Committee discussed whether to share contacts among committee members or to direct all contacts towards AW.

**ACTION: SD/AW to discuss out-of-office resilience for SFCC more generally and report back to committee.**

#### **3.3. and possible unpaid Shared Parental Leave (~May/June 2022)**

SD also shared early thoughts around the possibility of requesting unpaid Shared Parental Leave next summer, during the baby's first year. This is still to be discussed in detail with line management, and a formal written request has not yet been made. Committee took the opportunity to discuss this creatively as part of a general discussion on SFCC resilience and felt this eventuality could present a development opportunity for one of the SFCC member biologists as part of a paid secondment to SFCC.

**ACTION: Committee to discuss an SFCC secondment as required at the September meeting.**

### **4. 10:55: SFCC year-end financial report**

SFCC have now received all membership subscriptions in full for last year. Overall, SFCC finished with a slight deficit as budgeted. All one-off database transition costs were accounted for in the cashflow report and annual database costs going forward will be slightly less than discussed at previous meetings. In previous years, SFCC's total database cost was £6000 and in future years the total cost is anticipated to be approximately £8000.

### **5. 11:00: Manager's report (January – May) by PowerPoint.**

SD shared updates on the following areas;

- Welcome to new member Flow Country Rivers Trust and prospective member Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust. Committee discussed resourcing in the Northern region and the need to maintain member support and engagement.
- Successful transition of SFCC database to Microsoft cloud hosting providing a more accessible and resilient long-term solution. SFCC have a strong working relationship with our developer who was thanked in person for his contributions to SFCC in recent years.
- Very significant demand for SFCC electrofishing training after postponed courses last year. As the colleges were unable to administer and host the courses this year, SFCC have stepped up to run the courses 'in-house' via a blend of online teaching and practical field delivery in

small groups. This has been a significant and unplanned administrative and logistical challenge for SD, JR and the other SFCC trainers.

- All regions successfully contributed to the mapping pressures on Atlantic salmon project in March and April and the data was provided to Marine Scotland for collation and analysis. A working group has met to appraise outputs and there is a need to wrap-up and communicate the project.
- [Mapping](#) of the Carradale North Salmon Farm escape recaptures.
- Drone river survey workshop with thanks to SR, Richard Davies and Struan Candlish for providing presentations.
- Progress in developing mobile/tablet field data collection tools using Survey123. Tools developed so far include pink salmon, escaped farmed salmon and fish health reporting. Several further tools are in development.

Committee discussed challenges around habitat data collection and data requirements for answering specific management questions. SR also reported success in deploying a smolt data collection tool using Survey123.

**ACTION: SR/SD to catch up to share progress in development of field data collection tools.**

#### **6. 11:20: Feedback on 2021 Biologists' Meeting and ideas for 2022.**

In February SFCC held the biologists' meeting online for the first time with a very healthy turnout from a range of different organisations at home and abroad. Committee discussed plans for next year and agreed that a hybrid (in-person or online) approach should be further explored. It was felt that the core attendance of at least one member per Trust/catchment needs to be enabled and retained. The significant travel and subsistence costs of remote members was acknowledged.

**ACTION ALL: To think creatively about the biologists' meeting format and key themes in advance of the September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.**

#### **7. 11:30: AOB**

AW mentioned the developing Riverwoods partnership approach which aims to get trees in the ground next to rivers for a range of ecological benefits. AW/SD were approached by James Hutton Institute and NatureScot regarding a science/evidence sub-group for the Riverwoods initiative which is due to form in the coming months.

**ACTION: SD to join the Riverwoods science/evidence sub-group.**

#### **Remaining 2021 meetings:**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December