

WRASFB ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

supported by the Fisheries Management Scotland [FMS] and Fish Legal



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAR.....Controlled Activities Regulations
CL.....Conservation Limit
DSFB.....District salmon Fishery Board
FMO.....Fisheries Management Organisation
IFM.....Institute of Fisheries Management
INNS.....Invasive Non Native Species
MH.....Marine Harvest
MSMarine Scotland
MSS.....Marine Scotland Science
MSW.....Multi Sea Winter
NASCO..North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation
PAW.....Partnership Against Wildlife Crime
SAC.....Special Area of Conservation
SEPA.....Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SNH.....Scottish Natural Heritage
SSSI.....Site of Special Scientific Interest
THC.....The Highland Council
TSSC.....The Scottish Salmon Company
WFR.....Wild Fisheries Reform

The Board Role

The Wester Ross Area Salmon Fisheries Board (WRASFB) is a statutory body responsible for the protection and enhancement of salmon and sea trout fisheries in its designated area. It was constituted under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Act) Scotland 2003. Salmon fishing rights are private heritable titles that are registered separately from land and as such be bought and sold like any other property.

District salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs) finance their work by applying a levy on the salmon fishery proprietors as directed under the 2003 Act. The 2003 Act states that “a district Board shall have the power to impose an assessment, to be known as the fishery assessment, on each salmon fishery in their district. The fishery assessment is assessed at such uniform rate as is determined for all fisheries in the district by the Board and, shall be levied according to the valuation of a fishery as entered into the valuation role”.

A DSFB may do such acts, execute such works and incur such expenses as may appear expedient for:

The protection or improvement of the fisheries within their district;

The increase of salmon (or sea trout); or

The stocking of the waters of the district with salmon (and seatrout).

Elected members of those salmon fishery owners (proprietors) form the core membership of the Board with a requirement for representatives of salmon anglers and tenant netsmen being co opted onto the Board.

Board Members

Board members are elected tri annually and the last election took place in November 2016. The elected members then elect one of their number as Chairman before considering candidates for co option to the Board. The current Board members are:

Upper Proprietors

Bill Whyte... (chairman).....mandatory for Jane Maclay, (Gruinard).

Steven Bate

Donald Rice.....mandatory for Regina Anna Properties (Dundonnell)

Hugh Whittle.....mandatory for Inveran Fishings Ltd (Inveran)

Rosie Nichol.....mandatory for Pat Wilson (Kinlochewe)

Gordon Crawford..... mandatory for Nicholas Crawford (Ellean Darrach)

Neil Morrison.....mandatory for Phillip Smith (Coulin)

Lower Proprietors

Gordon Crawford.....mandatory for Nicholas Crawford (Eilean Darrach)

Johnny Whitteridge.....mandatory for Jane Whitteridge

Cooptee`s

Colin Blyth..... Anglers' representative

Brian FraserGhillies' representative

Board Staff

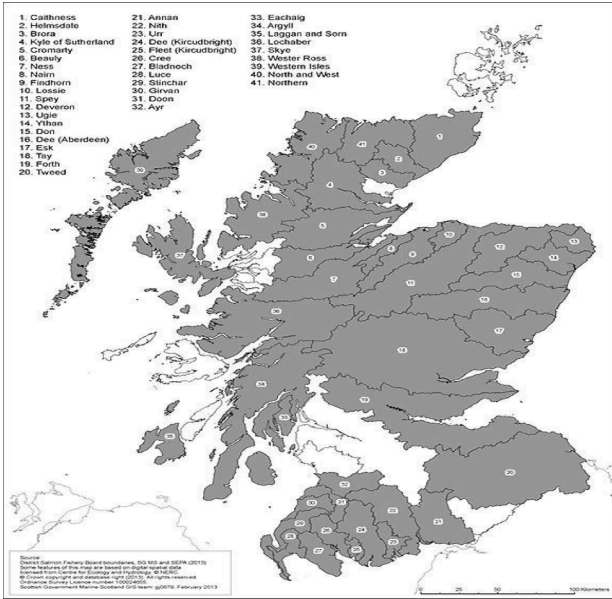
The Board has no full time staff but meets its obligations with part time staff and voluntary positions.

Peter Jarosz Clerk to the Board (P/T)

Bill Whyte.....Water Bailiff (v)

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Ray Dingwall..... | Water Bailiff (v) |
| Neil Morrison..... | Water Bailiff (v) |
| Duncan Mackenzie..... | Water Bailiff (v) |

The Area



What We Do

Most DSFBs throughout Scotland are responsible for only one river within one catchment and the funding raised by the levies are used to provide protection and enhancement of salmon stocks throughout the whole system where every proprietor sees the benefits.

The WRASFB however, has one of the highest numbers of rivers / catchments within its boundaries so recognising the geographical extent of the Board area (Kanaird to Applecross) and the high numbers of rivers within it, the WRASFB addresses at Board level only those tasks which are essential or are most effectively handled centrally as part of the Boards statutory remit. All other basic rivers management aspects remain with the proprietors.

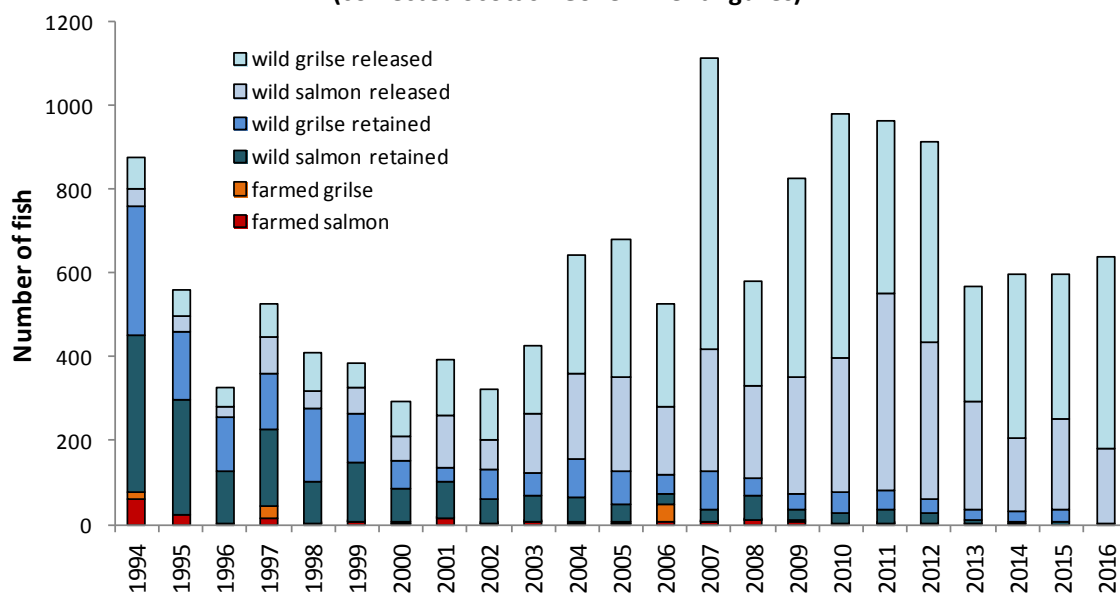
2016 Catch Statistics

Graphs for salmon and sea trout for WRASFB meeting August 2017

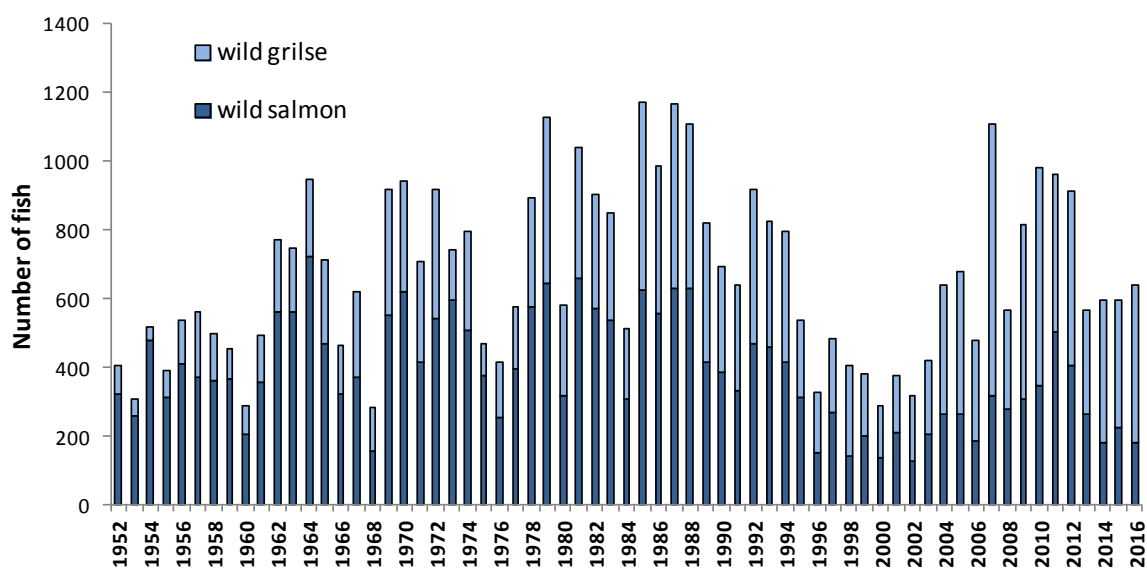
Salmon

Note that the 2016 figures have been corrected from those published based on assumption that all salmon and grilse were released (one fishery reported some in retained table when they should have been in released table in return catch form).

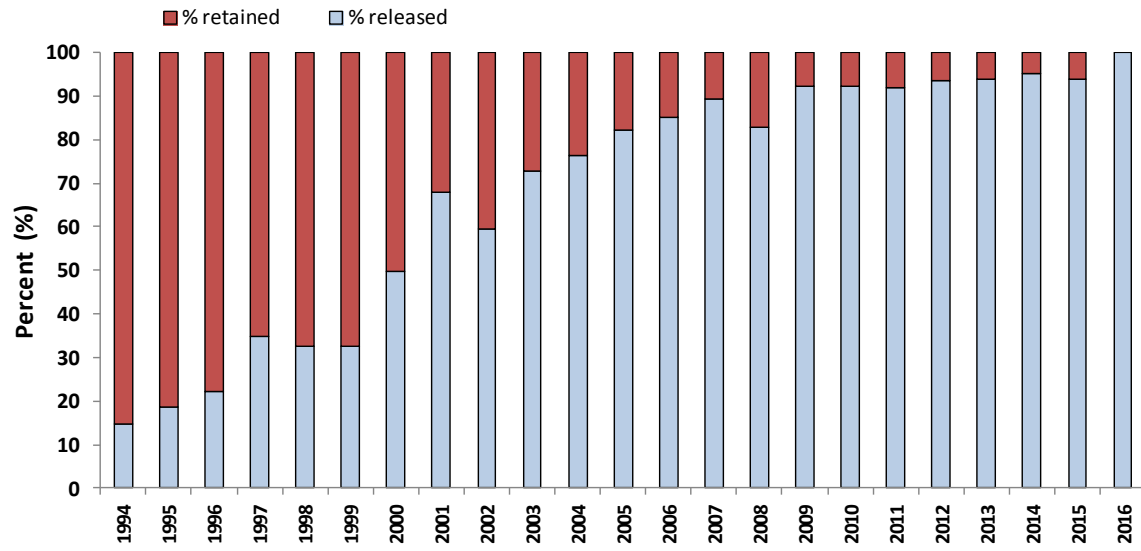
Rod catches of salmon and grilse in WRASFB area 1994 - 2016
(corrected Scottish Government figures)



Rod catches of wild salmon and grilse in WRASFB area 1952-2016
(corrected Scottish Government figures)

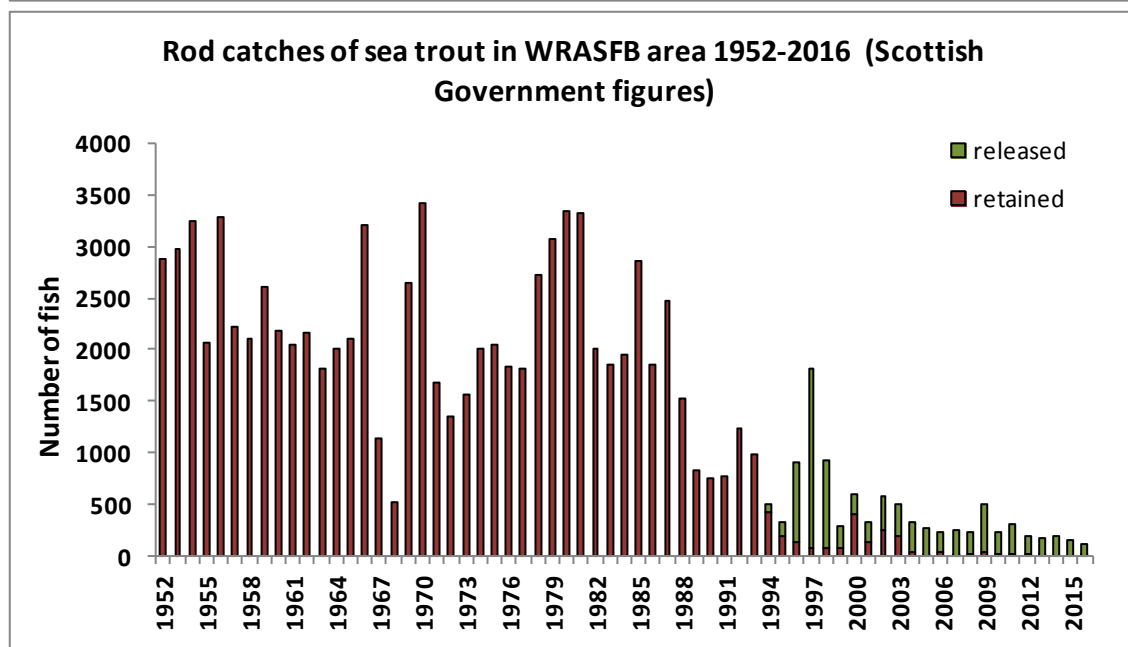
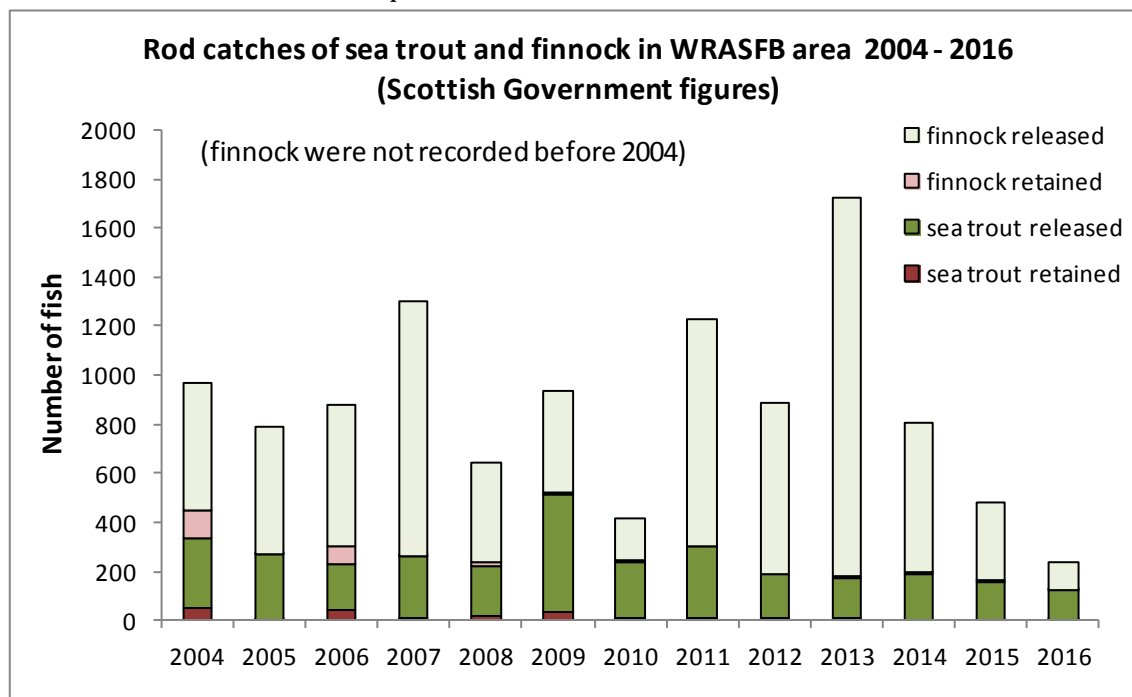


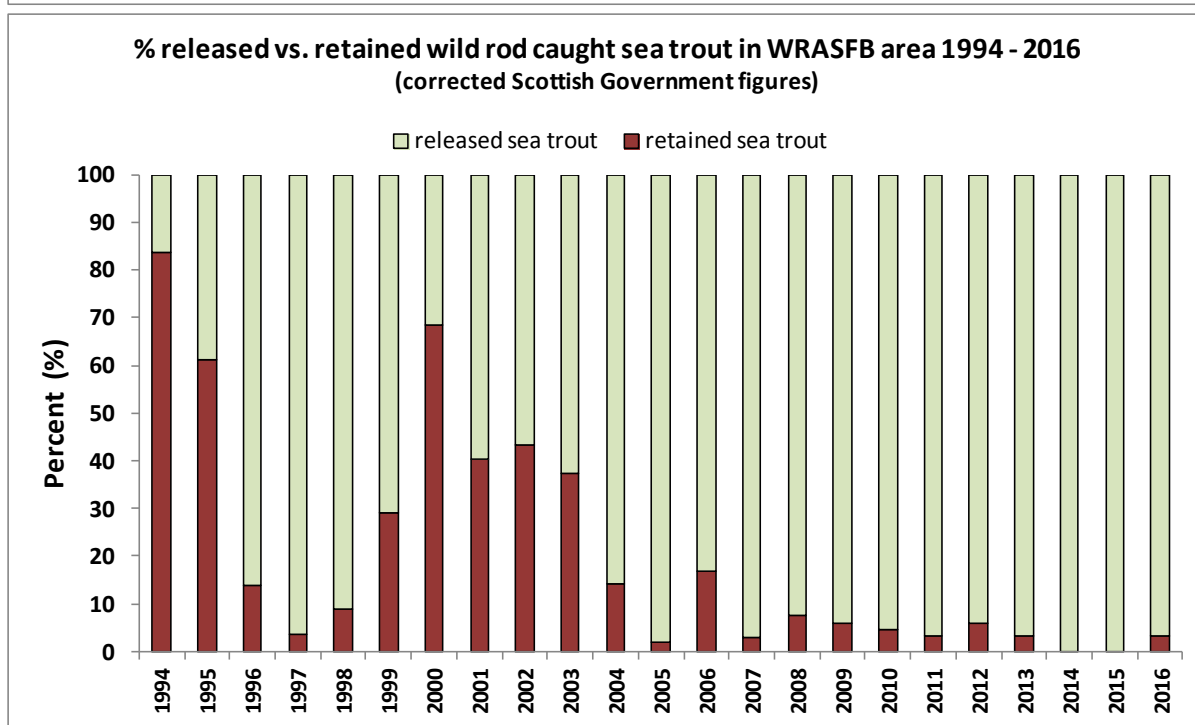
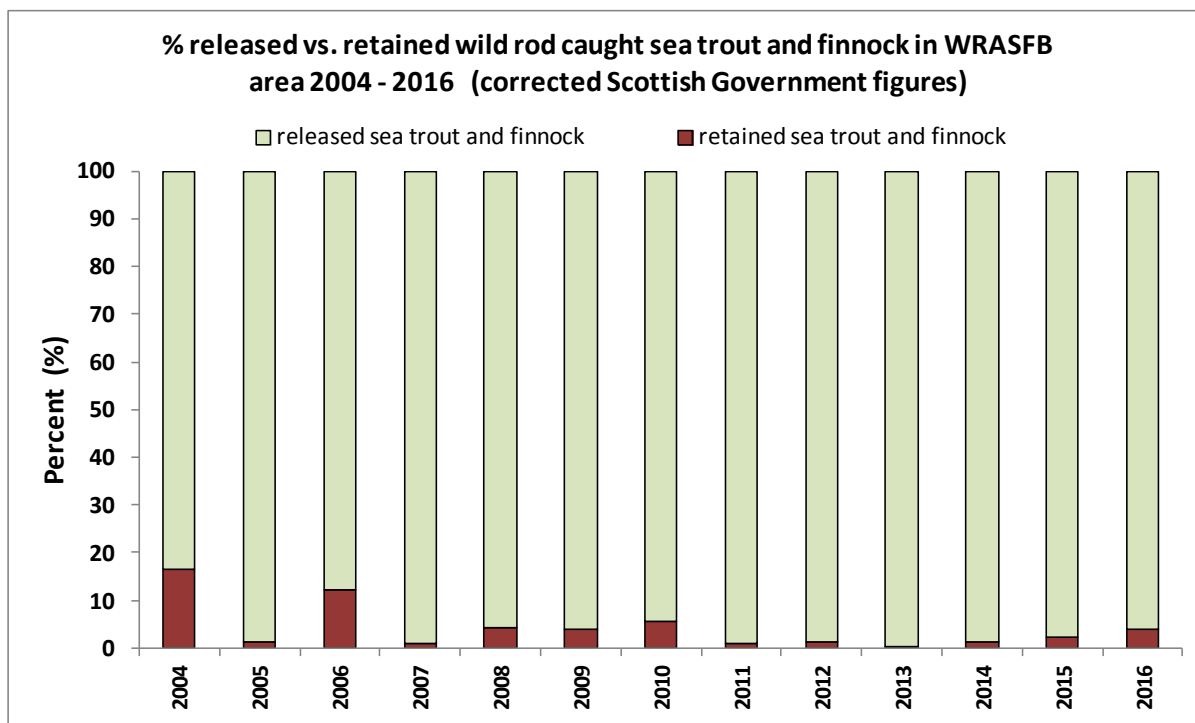
% released vs. retained wild rod caught salmon & grilse in WRASFB area 1994 - 2016
(corrected Scottish Government figures)



Sea trout

Notes: the relatively large number of finnock released in 2013 include high numbers of River Ewe fish (?mostly early returned fish) and Torridon river fish. As for salmon, I've corrected figures for the Gruinard river based on assumption that all sea trout and finnock were released in 2016.





Fisheries Monitoring

The Board authorises and funds the WRFT to conduct the electro fishing surveys that are carried out on a bi-annual, rolling programme basis. The Board also authorises and funds the WRFT in the collation and interpretation of the annual catch returns which along with the electro fishing data is fed into a Marine Scotland model which when interpreted correctly, can assist in determining the health of the juvenile salmon stocks of rivers within the Board area. The Board also authorises and funds the WRFT in the collation and interpretation of sea-lice data for Board responses to aquaculture planning.

Fisheries Management

Whilst the physical day to day fisheries management aspects are left to the proprietors discretion, the Board with assistance from WRFT, deals with any aquaculture and hydro planning applications. These are taking up a lot more time than might seem possible as there are currently no full planning applications in the system. There was a screening and scoping request for Bottle Island and some public meeting referring to expansion and relocation of the Tanera farm and a new farm at Horse Island but they have not entered the planning system yet.

Skye on the other hand has had an influx of applications, some of which are on Skye's east coast so have the potential to directly impact on the Applecross area. We have therefore been assisting the Skye board in their responses. This is not about giving them freebies, it's about attempting to help manage impacts that could affect us.

2016/2017 Conservation Limits

| Mainland rivers | Grade for 2016 | Final Grade for 2017 |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Kanaird | 3 | 3 |
| Ullapool | 3 | 2 |
| Broom | 3 | 3 |
| Dundonnell | 3 | 2 |
| Gruinard | 3 | 2 |
| Little Gruinard | | 2 |
| Ewe | 3 | 2 |
| Kerry & Badachro | | 1 |
| Torridon | 2 | 3 |
| Balgy | | 2 |
| Applecross | 3 | 3 |

Catch and Release Best Practice Guidance

The Board has added the most current and up to date guidance on catch and release to it's website.
<http://wrasfb.dsfb.org.uk/files/2013/06/Catch-and-Release-leaflet-2017.pdf>

Fisheries Protection

The WRASFB levy income limit means it is not financially able to employ any full time water bailiffs but authorises those who have studied and passed the IFM bailiff qualification course. Although directly employed by some estates, combined operations have been The Scottish Government has issued a moratorium on coastal / mixed stock netting operations throughout Scotland but legal netting operations can still be conducted within estuaries where the conservation limit is demonstrated to be category 2 or 1. This makes all coastal netting operations within Wester Ross.....illegal.

The Board has access to a fully compliant and MCA coded vessel and coastal patrols are being carried out in various locations throughout the Board area. Currently these are provided free of charge as the vessel is doing other things in each area. This cannot continue indefinitely and if it is to continue, fuel costs will need to be discussed, agreed and cleared.

Predator Monitoring/Management

There are reports of increased numbers of piscivorous duck sightings throughout the board area. The Board wishes to instigate a monitoring system which will rely on numbers of sightings being reported to the Board in order for them to collate the data and apply for an annual control licence. Those wishing to participate in this monitoring should notify the Clerk to the Board who will issue monitoring sheets.

The Board has 2 fully trained and qualified marksmen authorised by Scottish Government to undertake lethal control of rogue seals as a last resort.

Fisheries Development

This buzz phrase is being driven by the perception that there is any amount of fishing available, but not let. Here on the west the bigger rivers are usually fully booked during their normal fishing season. For others that are fully dependant on rain, it is not yet clear if there is any desire for anglers to buy any days on rivers that may or may not have water.....or fish.

Wild Fisheries Reform

As reported to you all back in February, there are many parts of the WFR that are not being taken forward by the Scottish Government due to a lack of funding on their part. There will still be changes in 2018/2019 but these will be greatly reduced and will rely on “voluntary” actions by Boards with only the potential for a one off funding package to facilitate the merging of one or more contiguous Boards.
<http://news.gov.scot/news/wild-fisheries>

Compliance with Good Governance Requirements

Governance

The Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 requires all District Salmon Fishery Boards to operate in a transparent manner. As part of this the WRASFB voluntarily adheres to the Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) Code of Good Practice. A copy of the code can be found at the FMS web site:
www.asfb.org.uk/publications

This section of the report details how the WRASFB meets the terms of the reporting requirements of the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013.

Meetings

The WRASFB holds local meetings on an approximately quarterly basis at the Harbour Centre, Gairloch. All meetings are open to the public and are advertised on our web site (www.wrasfb.dsfb.org.uk), along with a draft and final agenda. The minutes of these meetings, once approved, are also published on our web site.

Complaints

Part of the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 requires all District Salmon Fishery Boards to establish a formal complaints procedure. A copy of the WRASFB complaints procedure is available at [WRASFB Complaints Procedure](#)

In the period of the financial year 2016-17 there were no complaints made to the Board.

Declaration of Interests

All members of the WRASFB are required to complete and keep up-to-date a declaration of interests relevant to their position on the Board. The most up to date register is available at the WRASFB office.

Financial Accounts 2016-2017

<http://wrasfb.dsfb.org.uk/files/2013/06/WRASFB-Accounts-2017.pdf>