

MINUTES OF WRASFB ANNUAL PROPRIETORS' & PUBLIC MEETINGS

HARBOUR CENTRE, GAIRLOCH	PRESENT:	
DATE: 16 October 2018	Bill Whyte (BW) Chair	John Mackenzie (JM)
OPENED AT:11.00 CLOSED AT:12.15	Rosie Nicoll (RN)	Duncan Mackenzie (DM)
	Donald Rice (DR)	Neil Morrison (NM)
	Kathryn Pritchard-Jones	Ray Dingwall (RD)
	Mary Gibson (MG)	Michael Aitchinson (MA)
	Peter Cunningham (PC)	Peter Jarosz (PJ) Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Bate, Hugh Whittle, Gordon Crawford and Archie MacLellan.

2. Comments

- There were four proprietors attending the annual meeting, two mandatorys, two invitees and two members of the public.
- BW gave an up-to-date report on Sgeir Dughall pointing out that the SSC had submitted an EMP to HC who were in the process of evaluating its content. Once HC have reviewed the EMP it will come to the Board for comment/response The outcome of this particular case means that will be no more 10-year term conditions as HC planning department are now favouring an EMP as part of the planning consent conditions.

3. Annual Report 2017-8

Copies of the Annual Report 2017-18 were available at the meeting and the chairman talked the meeting through its contents:

- The report contains rod catch figures for 2017 for salmon and sea trout with some 98% of caught fish being returned throughout the Board area. This is in line with all rivers being category 3.
- Sighting forms for the recording of piscivorous ducks presence were sent out by email early in the year but none have been returned to date. Verbal reports seem to suggest that numbers of these predators are increasing so sightings of cormorants, mergansers, goosanders as well as herons need to be recorded (and any mink sightings should be noted/reported).
- The ScotGov has allocated a sum of money for facilitating the voluntary amalgamations of District Salmon Fishery Boards but WRASFB will not be applying for any money for this purpose. An amalgamation with the Cromarty DSFB (something that ScotGov under their Wild Fisheries Review actually put forward for consideration) was never an option for WRASFB. A possible amalgamation with the Skye DSFB could have been an option but the disparity between the WRASFB levy rate of 90p in the pound and the SDSFB levy rate of 40p in the pound made any possible amalgamation an impossibility.
- There are two fish farms in the Board area that operate under the "umbrella" of a CLEUD and have never gone through the planning process. It is the Board's firm belief that the CLEUDs were obtained following the submission by the applicant of erroneous information in their application. The Board has been in long-term contact with the Highland Council regarding this case in an attempt to bring both fish farms back into the planning process.

All those present expressed their approval of the report and of the work that the board had achieved within the year.

4. Accounts 2017-8

PJ reported that copies of the WRASFB accounts (2017-8) had been forwarded to all proprietors by email for their perusal.

In the time between the accounts being sent out and the date of the annual meeting, there were no queries or questions from proprietors regarding the accounts.

PJ then talked through the contents of the accounts, highlighting the fact that the Board, following two years of exceptional expenditure due to legal costs, was now in the 2017-18 accounts experiencing our more usual annual budget costs.

PJ was also able to present half-year budget figures that are predicting that the current financial year (2018-19) should also end with expenditure costs similar to our usual annual budget.

It should be noted that the legal costs incurred by the Board regarding Sgeir Dughall amounted to £8629 in the 2016-17 accounts.

There is about £1400 still outstanding from the 2018-18 levy invoices.

Both the WRASFB chairman and the SWRFT administrator are members of the FMS Aquaculture Group so both board and trust are represented on that group.

Those present at the meeting pronounced their approval of the accounts.

5. WRFT Biologist's Report

PC reported that from the fieldwork he had completed this year to date and then showed a film from Norway that graphically examined the reasons for the demise of native wild Norwegian salmon.

The film stated that there are some 300 million salmon produced each year by Norwegian fish farms and the sad statistic is that Norway's wild salmon would now only fill 3 fish farm cages. The film also claimed that some 600 fish farms in Norway have almost wiped out their native wild salmon.

Most of those viewing the film commented that what has happened in Norway is in the advanced process of happening in Scotland. Therefore the government needs to act now by limiting expansion of aquaculture and immediately tightening up the regulatory regime to avoid the catastrophe that has happened in Norway.

The meeting closed at 1215 hours.



Signed by the Clerk to the Board:

Dated: 19 October 2018