

MIXED STOCK FISHERIES WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2008, AT 10.30 AM, ROOM 449, PENTLAND HOUSE

Present: David Crawley, Chair
Richard Slaski, Secretariat
Hugh Campbell Adamson, ASFB
Tony Andrews, Atlantic Salmon Trust
Ian Calcott, SANA
Walter Davidson, SNFAS
Paul Knight, Salmon and Trout Association
James Mackay, SNFAS
George Pullar, Independent
Willie Shearer, SNFAS
Julian Maclean, FRS Scientific Adviser

In attendance: Louise Donnelly, Scottish Government, Salmon and Freshwater
Fisheries Team
Manson Wright, Scottish Government, Salmon and Freshwater
Fisheries Team

Chairman's welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the Mixed Stock Fisheries Working Group (MSFWG). He stated he was a former Civil Servant and now had a range of interests [as per Val 's note]. Members of the Group introduced themselves – details of their respective organisations in Annex 1. The Scottish Government Marine Directorate officials explained their role in support of the work of the independent Group.

Chairman's introduction

2. The Chairman referred to the Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Forum and Priority for Action 2.5 in the Strategic Framework on the development of a strategy

for Mixed Stock Fisheries. The Group's remit on behalf of the Forum is to "review all aspects of mixed stock fishing, including its impact on management conservation, taking advice from FRS and other scientists. The Group shall take account of international trends, guidelines and obligations. The Group shall also look into the financial issues concerning Mixed Stock Fishing (MSF). The project will culminate in a strategy report with associated timescales."

3. The question of mixed stock fisheries is a significant issue in terms of conservation. Salmon is an iconic fish. Benefits from salmon are economic, financial and social.

4. It is important that the Group stands back and looks at the evidence, identifying any gaps in knowledge. The Group will consider options for management and their implications, taking into account all interests. The Group will produce a report with clear and firm recommendations which will be presented to Scottish Ministers. There is a need to focus on the evidence and recommend management measures based on best evidence and best practice.

5. The Group noted that a press release was issued by the Scottish Government announcing the establishment of the Group and its membership. Copies were circulated.

6. **It was agreed that:** Group papers and minutes as agreed should be put on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Fisheries/Salmon-Trout-Coarse>.

Paper MSFWG/08/01 – Terms of Reference

7. The Group discussed the proposed Terms of Reference. The Group considered the question of information in the public domain and information provided to the Group which might be considered as commercially confidential or otherwise within the scope of the Data Protection Act. It was agreed that the Salmon and

Freshwater Fisheries Team (SFF hereafter) would prepare a short note on Freedom of Information, commercial confidentiality and the Data Protection Act.

8. The Group agreed the Terms of Reference.

8.1 **Action:** SFF to prepare a guidance note on FOI, confidentiality and the Data Protection Act, to be ready for distribution 14 days before Meeting 2.

Paper MSFWG/08/02 – Working Methodology

9. The Group agreed it will be effectively building up a body of evidence and reviewing and discussing this around the table. Some of this will be in the form of review of existing literature, some in the form of papers the Group specifically requests to be prepared for it, and some by way of position papers prepared by members of the Group. In due course the Group will begin to write its own report on its activities and this will be a Group effort facilitated by the secretariat. It will be vital to keep all members of the Group informed of progress.

10. The Group discussed how to engage with the public and wider interests in addition to placing its papers on the Website. This is a comprehensive Group but for instance local authorities have a stake in the outcome. The Group needs to identify significant stakeholders and ask what they think as its work progresses. It is not envisaged that the Group will require to formally consult on its final report for Scottish Ministers, although Scottish Ministers might decide to hold their own consultation as part of their consideration of the recommendations from the Group. The Chair confirmed that this Group will send its report directly to Scottish Ministers.

11. The Group committed to working towards consensus and the Chair invited members of the Group to discuss any concerns with him at any point. He invited members to be forthcoming with their views and assured them that any views would be reported on a non-attributable basis.

12. The Group would like to consider a wide range of information and evidence such as on the economic and social, as well as scientific aspects. The Group

concluded that the secretariat should maintain a reference set of documents and submissions considered on behalf of the Group. Key documents should be summarised for the Group so as not to overload Group members with paper work. The Group agreed that the secretariat would invite suggestions on material and references from Group members.

The Group discussed the need to have a glossary of key terms. It also discussed the fact that there had been previous management actions taken with respect to MSF, and that evidence of the effectiveness of these actions would be very useful in terms of informing the Group's discussions.

13. It was agreed that:

13.1 Consultation will be important during the process, including: at public meetings (eg Freshwater Fisheries Forum); and, in writing, with other relevant stakeholders groups such as local authorities, SNH, SEPA.

13.2 A glossary of terms should be produced.

13.3 A succinct review of social, economic and other evidence available in the literature should be undertaken.

13.4 Evidence of effectiveness of management options that have already been implemented should be considered.

13.5 A specific study of economic implications of MSF management options should be undertaken.

13.6 The Group's work and emerging conclusions and recommendations should be tested against the activities of other organisations in this area, such as NASCO and the European Commission.

14. Actions:

14.1 FRS to incorporate into its paper a glossary of key terms; any evidence of effectiveness of the range of management approaches; gaps in available scientific information (with an indication of what is currently being done to bridge the gaps); to be ready for distribution 14 days before 2nd meeting of MSFWG.

14.2 Secretariat to set up a reference set with index of documents and submissions considered on behalf of the Group and keep the membership informed.

14.3 Secretariat to review and prepare a short summary for the group's consideration of the key documents.

14.4 Secretariat to ask Group members for references or copies of available literature – **immediate action**; and review paper to be ready for distribution 14 days before Meeting 2.

14.5 SFF to seek advice from Scottish Government economic advisers on a specification for a study into the economic implications of MSF and of the evaluation of management options; to be ready for distribution 14 days before Meeting 2.

Paper MSGWG/08/03 – Work Timetable

15. The Group discussed its work programme, and concluded that it would be useful to work towards completing Meeting 5 before the main net fishing season starts in May 2009. The summer period will be devoted to drafting of the report (including electronic/mailed discussions), and the Group will meet in September to finalise its report. The Group considered it unlikely it would reach a final consensus until it had undertaken the work steps envisaged for Meetings 2 to 5.

16. The Group was advised that the next NASCO meeting is in the first week of June, and that it might be helpful if the Group could be ready to present a brief progress report to NASCO.

17. It had been initially thought that Group members' papers would be submitted prior to, and discussed at, Meeting 3. However, the Group felt that if some members had papers ready to be discussed at Meeting 2 this could be easily accommodated.

18. The Group discussed various pieces of available evidence that might be summarised and considered. It also considered from which international sources (eg ICES, NASCO, Norway, Russia, etc) scientific evidence might be sourced. Grey literature, eg magazine articles, was also considered. It was agreed the Group would be happy to take an inclusive approach to evidence, but that FRS would be the Group's scientific adviser.

19. **It was agreed that:**

19.1 The meeting schedule will be:

19.1.1 Meeting 2 – Tuesday, 13 January 2009

19.1.2 Meeting 3 – Tuesday, 24 February 2009

19.1.3 Meeting 4 – Tuesday, 31 March 2009

19.1.4 Meeting 5 – Wednesday, 6 May 2009

19.2 All meetings to be held in Pentland House, except perhaps Meeting 5.

19.3 A draft update for NASCO for consideration at Meeting 5.

19.4 SFF would make inquiries of SNH regarding any regular reporting by SNH, eg under the European Habitats Directive.

19.5 Members invited to submit their sectoral papers in advance of Meeting 3, if they wished to do so.

19.6 A map of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated for salmon in Scotland might be useful for the Group to see.

20. **Actions:**

20.1 SFF to prepare a map of SAC's designated for salmon for Meeting 2.

20.2 SFF to ask SNH regarding any reporting by them and publication timetable.

20.3 Group members who wish to submit position papers for Meeting 2 to do so to be ready for distribution 14 days before Meeting 2.

Paper MSFWG/08/04 – Issues to consider

21. The Scottish Government supports the work of this Group and the Forum with a remit from the Steering Group but will not be taking any position on MSF. It will support deliberations on the basis of the best available evidence, and looks forward to seeing the recommendations which the Group will make to the Scottish Government. The SFF team will support the work of the Group as required. In due course a report on the outcome will be put to Ministers. A press release has been circulated.

22. The Chair opened up the Group discussion so that all members could express views. The discussion was wide-ranging and covered issues such as:

22.1 The ecological approach and the nature of mixed stock and mixed species fisheries.

22.2 The importance of sea trout.

22.3 Technical measures in terms of nets.

22.4 Catch and release.

22.5 Seasons for netting and angling.

22.6 New science-based techniques such as genetic mapping.

22.7 Traceability and enforcement.

22.8 NASCO.

22.9 Suggestions for reports and literature that would provide useful information for the Group.

23. **It was agreed that:**

23.1 The Group's remit is not about recommendations for the reallocation of resources but rather the effective management of salmon stocks in the interests of all.

23.2 A short paper on the overarching legal and policy context to include key Scottish, UK and European obligations and international commitments would be helpful.

23.3 Sea trout must be considered by the Group because 'salmon' in the legislation includes all migratory fish of the species *Salmo salar* and *Salmo trutta*, commonly known as salmon and sea trout respectively

24. **Actions:**

24.1 SFF to prepare a short paper on the overarching legal and policy context to be ready for distribution 14 days before Meeting 2.

24.2 The Chair thanked all Group members for their active participation.