



Western Isles District salmon Fisheries Board – Interim Report 2019/20

The WIDSFB was re-formed on 12th February 2019 after following due legal process and holding an election. The inaugural meeting of the new board took place on the same date.

Dickon Green was elected chairman of the Board and Jason Laing was appointed as Clerk to the Board.

It was agreed at the meeting that the annual levy would be set at 100p per £1 and that £57,000 of the monies raised would be used to provide core funding for the Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust (OHFT).

Annual Catches

At this stage in the season catch data is not yet available but it looks like it has been a reasonable season for grilse for many fisheries in the district. Some rivers reported fish arriving early although the Sea Trout run seems to have been quite late. Water levels were good in most areas from early in the season so fish have been able to run freely. A full report will be included in the annual report when we have a clearer picture.

Bailiffs

Since the formation of the board the Clerk has appointed 14 water bailiffs. Although it has been a quiet season for salmon poaching there have been four gill nets and one dinghy confiscated by bailiffs, two of which were set in the sea and two found near a fresh water loch. All were reported to Police Scotland. There is some concern that there is no longer a local wildlife liaison officer.

Survey Work

Tagging OHFT have completed 5 tagging events between Gress and Steinish with 1 remaining at Steinish on 01/10/19. A total of 97 Sea Trout have been tagged and 13 recaptured/previously tagged fish.

Sweep Netting Surveys All OHFT sweep netting surveys are complete for 2019. 22 sweeps in total across 6 sites.

Electrofishing OHFT are 1/3 of the way through the National Electrofishing Programme (20 sites remaining). We have completed some sites requested directly to OHFT by the estates (South Uist).

Planning

There has been 5 informal consultations brought to OHFT/WIDSFB attention. There has been 4 formal planning consultations including the Vuia Mor (Loch Roag) and Cheesebay (North Uist) EMP's. There has also been preliminary discussions between OHFT and Scottish Water about sensitive catchments ahead of formal applications being submitted following the publication of their drought mitigation plan.

Meetings

The annual public meeting was held on 12th February 2019 at Stornoway council offices. This meeting was publicised by means of email and via the Stornoway Gazette.

The minutes from this meeting can be viewed at www.widsfb.org

In addition, a further meeting of the Board was held on 27th August 2019. This meetings were publicised by means of email, the Board website and the Stornoway Gazette. The minutes from these meeting will be available for viewing once published.

The annual meeting of qualified proprietors was held on 27th August at Stornoway Council offices. This meeting was publicised by means of email to proprietors, Board website and the Stornoway Gazette and a copy of the notice was sent to the Scottish Government. The minutes from this meeting will be able to be viewed on the Board website once published.

Annual Report and Accounts

This interim report will be published on the Board website and a full annual report will be produced at the end of the year. The interim accounts for 2019/20 produced for the annual meeting of proprietors will be sent to the Scottish Government with a covering letter explaining why there are not yet annual accounts.

Proposed activities for the next year

Continue to develop and improve the WIDSFB website

Encourage participation in events like the FMS annual conference

Look to provide any additional training for water bailiffs that may be required

Continue to keep members updated with any news from FMS that may be relevant – JL asked if members were happy with the current way these updates were forwarded and it was agreed they were.

Seek feedback with regard to the Fishpal website

Hold two WIDSFB meetings and one proprietors meeting.

Complaints

The Board has set up and maintains a complaints procedure which can be viewed at www.widsfb.org The procedure was reviewed at 12/02/2019 and remains unaltered.

No complaints have been received this year.

Members' interests

The register of members' interests can be viewed at www.widsfb.org We have included a standing item at each Board meeting inviting Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.