

Wild Fisheries Review

MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR APRIL 2014

Welcome to the second progress bulletin to be issued by the panel appointed by Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, to conduct an independent review of our wild fisheries management system in Scotland. Full details of the panel's remit and membership can be found on the review's web page.

The past month has seen a great deal of further activity focused on engaging all stakeholders in the review and securing a genuinely collaborative approach to the thinking that needs to be done. Andrew Thin has held meetings around the country with a variety of stakeholders, and he has hosted two round table discussions with local fisheries practitioners in Pitlochry and Deeside. Further round table meetings are scheduled for late April/May in Dumfries, Perth, Caithness, Borders, Edinburgh and Strathclyde, and ten additional locations in June/July (details on the review web page). If you would like to attend one of these please contact Naeem Bhatti at the address below. Places are limited in order to ensure the opportunity for a participative discussion, but other arrangements will be made for you to speak with Andrew Thin if necessary.

The panel met on 22 April and made significant progress towards agreeing the central elements required of a new fisheries management system for Scotland. By the time of its next meeting on 19 May the panel expects to be in a position to confirm a number of core workstreams for detailed consideration over the summer.

The panel considered three background papers prepared by its advisors on comparable experience from other countries, international obligations that sit with the Scottish Government with respect to wild fisheries, and the evidence and data requirements required to underpin a modern management system. The different ways in which other countries manage their wild fisheries provide a wealth of material to inform development of a new system for Scotland. The panel is keen to draw on this experience and apply it to Scottish circumstances wherever relevant and practicable.

Members also finalised and agreed a paper setting out the main outcomes that the new system will be expected to deliver. In broad terms these can be summarised under four headings as follows –

- A robust system in which people have confidence –
 - Ensuring that international obligations and domestic policy objectives of the Scottish Government are met.
 - Enjoying high levels of confidence among all stakeholders, nationally and internationally.
 - Based on constructive, effective and productive working relationships between all involved.
 - Delivered by people who have the right skills and access to the necessary data.
 - Founded on management decision making that is transparent and based on sound evidence.
 - Regulated in a proportionate, consistent, accountable, transparent and targeted manner.
- A primary focus of sustainable management –
 - A degree of medium to long term certainty.
 - All fish stocks maintained above their conservation limits.
 - Flexible management able to respond to changing circumstances (climate change, fishing at sea, disease, etc.).
 - Affordable within the wider economic and public spending context.
- An overarching strategic approach –
 - Based on a cohesive integrated national strategy that is given due regard in local management and decision making.
 - Local policy objectives met in the context of priorities identified at a national level.
 - Contributing to the economy and social cohesion of Scotland.

- Consistent quality and effectiveness of management across all regions of the country.
- Greater participation across the population in fishing and fisheries management.
- A system which is open and accountable –
 - Funded in a manner that is transparent and accountable.
 - Resourcing aligned with the economic and social benefits that may be derived from wild fisheries.
 - Governance that is open and transparent.
 - Performance that is monitored and openly reported.

The final paper on the agenda for 22 April was an initial exploration of the key elements that will be required in order to construct a modern wild fisheries management system for Scotland. The panel will return to this issue on 19 May, but it was able to provisionally agree four key themes on which to build that thinking –

- At the heart of the system will need to be an effective leadership and oversight structure that can ensure a cohesive and integrated national approach, coordinate research and data availability, and regulate where appropriate on a variety of matters. This may be quite small, and could sit within an existing public body.
- Delivery of fisheries management within this national framework should, however, be primarily a local matter. There will therefore need to be an effective locally based delivery system that operates within a wider national framework but which harnesses local knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to best effect.
- Resourcing will be central to ensuring that the new system is capable of achieving the outcomes expected of it. The system will need to be able to adapt to changing economic circumstances and public spending priorities, and it will need to align as far as it can the raising and deployment of resources with the benefits to be derived from wild fisheries management.
- Lastly there will be a number of issues that cut across all of the above, and that are essential to the operation of an effective system. In particular there will be a need to ensure constructive, effective and productive relationships throughout the system and between all parts of it, and all elements of the system will need to focus on increasing public awareness and participation.

The panel will issue this week a formal call for written submissions to the review from any interested party. We would particularly welcome contributions from representative organisations and those with direct management experience gained in Scotland or (especially) overseas. Details of the information sought and how to contribute will be published on the review web page.

The next monthly progress bulletin will be issued in May. If you would like further information about the review, or if you would like to contact the panel chair, please email wildfisheriesreview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or telephone Naeem Bhatti on 0131 244 7061 or write to Wild Fisheries Review, Area 1B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ or visit www.scotland.gov.uk/wildfisheriesreview.