

Wild Fisheries Review

MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR MAY 2014

Welcome to the third progress bulletin to be issued by the panel appointed by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to conduct an independent review of the wild fisheries management system in Scotland, and a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed (in writing and verbally) to our thinking over the past month. The panel met on 19 May and gave further consideration to the two main elements of a new fisheries management system for Scotland, building on earlier work outlined in the April edition of this bulletin. The panel also agreed work priorities for June.

By far the largest element of the new system will be the local delivery function. The panel reconfirmed its view that a decentralised and locally autonomous model is much the best way to harness the high levels of enthusiasm and commitment that exist on the ground around much of Scotland. A network of local fisheries management organisations is envisaged, covering all parts of the country. These will probably be based on a common model constitution, with inclusive membership and boards drawn from the full spectrum of local stakeholders. They are likely to raise a substantial proportion of their resources locally, and a core element of this might be linked to and conditional on delivery of agreed national priorities. The panel recognised that Scottish Ministers may need reserve powers to secure effective fisheries management in any area of the country where local stakeholders are unable to form an effective local fisheries management organisation.

A new national leadership function is also central to the panel's evolving proposals. It will need to set high level strategic priorities for the sector, including coordination of research and data collection to ensure a consistent approach across the country. Other elements likely to be dealt with at national level include a degree of control over funding for the delivery of national priorities, and the setting of national standards for a variety of fisheries management activities. The panel agreed that the cost and scale of this national function must be tightly contained, and that a suitable model might take the form of some sort of national fisheries commissioner, probably appointed by Scottish Ministers, with a small supporting secretariat. Additional expertise and capacity could be provided by existing public organisations where needed, including from within Marine Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

The panel next meets on 23 June, and in the interim will be working on eight specific themes –

- The legal basis, structure and core activities of the local delivery organisations.
- The legal basis, structure and core activities of the national leadership function.
- Mechanisms whereby the new system might be funded.
- Control options for ensuring sustainable harvesting.
- Cost effective arrangements to manage non-compliance with fisheries legislation.
- Mechanisms to ensure that national research and information requirements are fulfilled.
- Measures to increase participation and maximise socio-economic contribution.

The work will continue to be informed by contributions and feedback from stakeholders through meetings held around the country, and that submitted by stakeholders in writing. By the end of May members of the panel will have held sixteen meetings with stakeholders during the course of the month. A further eleven stakeholder meetings have so far been scheduled for June, and two panel members will also be available at the Highland Show on Friday 20 June should anyone wish to speak with them (please contact Naeem Bhatti to make an appointment). Thank you to everyone who has responded so far to the call for evidence. The panel would like all submissions to be made by **15 July** in order to help it consider the info provided before formulating its report to the Minister.

The next monthly progress bulletin will be issued in late June. 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.