

Wild Fisheries Review

MONTHLY BULLETIN FOR AUGUST 2014

Welcome to the sixth and final progress bulletin to be issued by the panel appointed by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to conduct an independent review of wild fisheries management in Scotland. After an intensive, interesting and enjoyable six months we are now drafting our report to the Minister, and on track to deliver this by the first week of October.

Thank you to those who have recently sent us additional written contributions. We are also continuing to have a small number of meetings with stakeholders, all of which helps to further test and develop our thinking on matters of detail. This ongoing support from stakeholders is, as ever, very much appreciated.

The panel met with its advisers on 18 August and discussed in detail a first draft of sections of our report. This confirmed broad support among the advisers for the main recommendations that the panel are thinking about making, and produced a huge number of detailed points that will now be incorporated into a second more complete draft. We will meet again on 16 September to consider this further.

The areas still requiring development are primarily as follows –

- Realistic recommendations with regard to research and data gathering priorities given our assessment of the level of resources likely to be available.
- Confirmation that the core requirements of the new system will be affordable.
- Assessment of the main opportunities for angling development and how this might be paid for.
- Critical mass for a local FMO, the relevance of wider river basin management priorities, and greater clarity about how many FMOs might be appropriate given the priority attached to decentralisation and local empowerment.
- Mechanisms whereby licence applications to kill wild salmon might be assessed against a context involving a degree of uncertainty and a precautionary presumption.
- Potential reform of the protection order system to ensure that it is fully fit for purpose as a mechanism for facilitating sustainable access to fishing on an all species basis.

A number of stakeholders have asked for guidance about what action might be expected from the Scottish Government after our report has been submitted to the Minister. It is difficult to offer any certainty about this until the Minister has considered the report and decided what action he wishes to take.

Our understanding is that the Minister is likely to consult stakeholders on policy proposals for a new management system early in 2015, and that on the basis of this decisions will then be taken as to what action, if any, should follow. That may include specific policy and/or legislative changes, some of which may well take some time to implement in full.

In signing off this final newsletter we would like to reiterate our immense gratitude to all who have helped us with this review. Responsibility for the recommendations that we make to the Minister will, of course, rest with us, but the process of coming to our conclusions has involved huge efforts by a great many people on an entirely voluntary basis. Thank you very much indeed for that. A superb illustration of the power and potential inherent in this sector if ever there was one.

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.

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