

TRIPARTITE WORKING GROUP (TWG) – 6 May 2004
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, PENTLAND HOUSE, EDINBURGH

In attendance:

- Scottish Executive:** David Wilson (Chairman)
Phil Gilmour
Dave Wyman
Amanda Currie (TWG National Development Officer)
Pauline Munro – FRS
Malcolm Beveridge – FFL
Andy Rosie – SEPA
Dominic Gibbeson (Minutes Secretary)
- Industry:** Jean Balfour – SQS
Jamie Lindsay – SQS
John Webster – SQS
Alex Adrian – Panfish Scotland
- Wild Fishery Bodies:** Andrew Wallace – ASFB
Seymour Monro – AST
Jon Watt – AWCFT
Jane Wright – SANA
Bob Kindness – Seafield Centre, Kishorn
- Others:** Iain Sutherland – HIE
Colin Bean – SNH

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 The chairman opened the meeting at 10.45 am and welcomed everyone in the group.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies were received from Alan Anderson (WISCO), Gordon Brown (SEERAD), David Dunkley (SEERAD), Dave McKay (SANA), Hector Munro (STOLT), Robert Murray (Mainstream), Brian Simpson (SQS), Ronn Stagg (FRS), George Hamilton (HC), Robin Miller (Aquascot).

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

3.1 The minutes were approved with no amendments.

4. Matters Arising

Wild Catch Statistics

4.1 It had been decided that the catch statistics would be made available by FRS. Andrew Wallace went on to explain that there were difficulties in breaking down the

figures where catchments contain more than one river and to obtain more information would require extra resources.

Engaging with Local Authority Planners

4.2 Mandie Currie informed the group that the NDO and RDOs will be holding briefing meetings with local authority planners, in collaboration with COSLA. The organisation of the industry/planning workshop is in hand.

AMG Reports

4.3 The draft letter to AMGs on reporting/information flow was discussed. Jane Wright expressed her unhappiness that the reports received from the AMG's were only going to the NDO as she felt that they should be distributed on a wider basis, or at least, be held centrally. The general consensus was that the AMA confidentiality agreements prevent these reports from being widely circulated.

Action: Mandie Currie to amend letter as agreed and send out to AMGs and TWG partners

Sea Lice

4.4 Andrew Wallace explained that AWCFT are organising the sea lice seminar for a date (to be arranged) over the summer. The seminar has been long delayed, partly pending revisions to the national sea lice management strategy. A written version of the seminar content will be circulated to TWG and AMG members and consideration will be given to rolling out the seminar at the local level.

Action: Andrew Wallace to confirm a date for the seminar

4.5 Pauline Munro updated the group on proposals to monitor the effectiveness of voluntary sea lice management initiatives. It was stated in the Strategic Framework for Scottish Aquaculture that it was an objective to monitor sea lice and that the best way to do this was to monitor the compliance against a set standard. The only document at present containing such a standard was created by SQS in 1997 and would need updating. They would welcome any further comments on this issue. Reporting by FRS would then not include sea lice levels at particular farms but would only measure their compliance against the set standard. It was expressed that industry would be happy with this.

4.6 The issue of confidentiality was discussed. Andrew Wallace stated that the group should aspire to reduce the level of confidentiality. Industry responded by saying that there was genuine concern about the number of 'bad' press stories that have been appearing in recent months. It was also noted that confidentiality was a two way process.

5. National Development Officer

5.1 Amanda Currie outlined the main points in her report (a paper copy of which had been distributed to members of the group). She gave a summary outlining the signing of two new AMA's since the last meeting and updated everyone on the current negotiations for several others. She stated that the current AMA's were working well. Industry was interested to know about the priority of the TWG especially given that in

some areas the activity of the AMA is already happening although on a more informal basis.

5.2 Concerns were raised by wild fisheries representatives that there had been a certain amount of flexibility in the synchronisation of fallowing in some areas and stated that every attempt must be made to ensure that the length of the fallow period is not reduced again in future. The industry said that there had been some serious problems at the beginning of the year mainly caused by food scares. They felt that the wild fisheries could 'speak in support' of the industry and that this may be in both parties best interests.

5.3 It was asked why the RDO's had not been invited to the meeting, although the NDO pointed out that their attendance at the last plenary meeting was on a "one-off" basis. The Management Group were to discuss this and would report back.

5.4 A brief discussion was held into the TWG's priorities for the next year. It was agreed that apart from facilitating new AMAs, the focus should be on the delivery of the TWG Communication Strategy, and that the key priorities will be for a:

1. TWG Newsletter
2. TWG Conference
3. TWG Website

Mandie then outlined the key objectives for the NDO, for 2004-05, emphasising that the management group had already prioritised them. The key objectives were agreed.

5.5 The discussion then moved onto the structure of the TWG.. Some felt that we need to reconsider the structure and that a priority was to improve communication between the different levels in the group.

5.6 It was raised that Freshwater Fisheries had created a forum to provide information towards a new Bill. It was asked whether the Aquaculture Branch is doing something similar and what role the TWG might play in this.

Action: SE to consider how TWG might fit with/input into the forthcoming Aquaculture Bill and to circulate this to the plenary group for comment.

TWG Management Group to review TWG progress and agree overall vision for TWG.

6. Restoration sub-group progress report

6.1 Seymour Monro gave a brief summary of work that he has undertaken since he began his new role. Copies of his report are attached. Although progress has been made, there is a need to agree a firm steer on the way forward.

Action: Management Group to review Restoration Sub Group along with wider TWG remit/vision.

7. Presentation from Bob Kindness

7.1 Bob Kindness gave a presentation on *The River Carron: The resurrection of a river with a salmon farm on its doorstep*

8. Scientific sub-group progress update

8.1 Pauline Munro began her report by stating the terms of subgroup. These are to:

1. Review sea lice monitoring Protocols
2. Review AMA Management Areas

She discussed a report into the statistical analysis of sea lice that has been produced and said that a 'laymans' version would be available soon. The main findings however were that:

1. Sea lice were not uniformly distributed amongst cages
2. It is better to sample a few fish from several of the cages
3. It is better to sample more than 2 cages.

SQS stated that this would be written into their codes of best practice.

8.2 With regard to the review of Management Areas the subgroup had considered four different models to define Management Area boundaries where the areas, as per the tidal excursion model, are too large to manage effectively. The sub group had agreed that the Biological Zones concept was likely to be the best way forward. This would be based on experience of disease and sea lice outbreaks by the industry and would identify zones which would be sub-areas of the current Management Areas. It was realised that there may not be sufficient information at present to accurately define these zones and that the information required would differ from region to region. The FRS position was that prospective AMGs should agree Management Area (or zone) boundaries based on available information (and that this may be a fairly arbitrary decision) and then monitor the AMA to see if it works. The use of hydrographic models was raised in this regard. SEPA have been doing some development work with 3-dimensional models over wider sea areas. It is too early to say whether this will provide a practical tool, certainly validation of such models is expensive and requires a lot of field data. It may be feasible to set one up for particular 'hot spots' but routine use in all AMA areas is unlikely on the ground of cost.

Action: FRS to continue review of data being provided by industry and to advise on MA boundaries where possible. Fish Health Inspectors will attend AMG meetings where required.

9. Relocation Issues Update

9.1 Andrew Wallace updated the group on some of the issues raised by the Location/Relocation Working Group. The Working Group's main objective is to

establish a list of sites of interest where location is a concern. This was being done on a local level through the help of the Fisheries Trusts. The use of relocation to bring about desirable management within AMAs is an important driver of the relocation process. One of the main issues was the regulatory constraints and Allowable Zone of Effects (AZE's), which SEPA had agreed to look into. There is also the need to assess other factors, such as concerns of the Crown Estate and planning issues. Andy Rosie advised that SEPA is waiting for SE approval on a single tender bid for reviewing the AZE (the environmental "footprint" of farms). Alex Adrian pointed out that the industry is looking for larger farms which would allow longer fallowing periods, and there will be a need to retain farm sites to enable fallowing.

10. Synchronisation Papers and Synchronisation Issues

10.1 Amanda distributed a paper on *The Single year class stocking and synchronous fallowing*. There was a discussion about the role that synchronisation plays in the control of sea lice management. It was said that synchronisation is one approach to sea lice treatment and that there may be other issues at hand. Although AMA's may be signed without agreement on synchronised fallowing it was agreed that one of their main aims has to be to achieve this. It was generally agreed that synchronisation was a key objective of the concordat and is an important tool in the control of sea lice and fish diseases.

10.2 Jane Wright and John Watt felt that that the paper needs to be more explicit in how we are to take the synchronisation issue forward. The paper should clearly outline the mechanisms that are available for resolving difficulties. It was also raised that a more forward look at treatments is required and SEERAD said that it is currently looking into these areas.

Action: Mandie Currie to add a statement on mechanisms for resolving Management Area boundaries and synchronisation difficulties. The paper should then be circulated to AMGs and key stakeholders.

11. Presentation from Alex Adrian

11.1 Alex gave a presentation entitled *Loch Fyne: A working example of synchronised fallowing*.

12. AOB

12.1 There was no other business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1 The date of the next meeting was arranged for 24 November 2004.

13.2 The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.