

I attended the Board Meeting on 10th December 2013. This was the first meeting under new legislation where members of the public were entitled to attend.

The Fishery Director confirmed what we all know – that it has been a very poor year on the rivers in the catchment. Andrew Wallace from RAFTS was in attendance and endorsed this message in relation to most of Scotland's rivers, but stressed that although the main problems lie outwith the resources of Fishery Boards, they should do all they can to manage their rivers to the best of their ability.

The Fishery Director gave his usual detailed report covering first of all the fishing season then such varied subjects as coal mining, UDN research, bailiffing, and the hatchery. There is something interesting called the Northern Periphery Project in which NDSFB is a partner and which could lead to full funding of the cost of radio tracking our sea trout on their migrations.

The Trust Biologist would also appear to have been very busy this past season. Her report detailed the conferences and meetings she had attended in connection with her work in the catchment and also reported in particular on electrofishing surveys, the work on treatment of invasive non-native species, and signal crayfish.

The draft Fishery Management Plan for 2014-18 was discussed at some length and accepted as it stood, subject to an understanding that perceived areas of weakness in conservation measures should be looked at from time to time and, if need be, strengthened.

Peter Landale reported that he had negotiated a deal with Fish Pal to keep the Nith website going. Some fisheries had already committed to contribute and he hoped and expected that others would follow.

Moving on from the Board Meeting, I have to report that:

1. A recommendation has come down from ASFB that no fish should be killed before 15th May. This is obviously because of fears that spring stocks are so low as to be in danger of not being self sustaining. I do not imagine that our fisheries will find it difficult to accept this recommendation which is in accordance with our Board's position in any event.
2. D&GAA had a meeting with SEPA and with the Fishery Director from which it would appear that the shifting or removal of gravel should receive SEPA permission provided there is full consultation on how, where and when. D&GAA would recommend any other fishery wishing to investigate their own position to involve the Fishery Director who was extremely helpful in their case.