

NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING No. 1

HELD AT FRIARS CARSE, AULDGIRTH

on 10th December 2013 at 10am

1. Board Members Present

Percy Weatherall – Chairman
David Kempzell
Ronald Clark
John Kingan
Robbie Cowan
Wally Wright
Jim Gregory
Danny Marshall
Peter Landale
Mark Coombs
Nick Brown
Nick Wright

2. In Attendance

Roderick Styles – Clerk
James Henderson – Fishery Director
Debbie Parke – Trust Biologist
David McMichael – Head Water Bailiff
Andrew Wallace – Chairman of ASFB/RAFTS
Shona McFarlane – Scottish Environment Protection Agency
John Miller (JM)

3. Register of General Public present

Peter Hutchison – Douglas Hall Fishery, Cairngill House, Sandyhills, Dumfries, DG5 4NZ
Richard Gladwin – Blackwood House, Blackwood Estate, Auldgirth, Dumfries, DG2 0UA

4. Apologies

Thomas Florey (TF)
Stuart Graham (SNH)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that it was the first meeting to be held under the new legislation which means that members of the public were allowed to attend. A record must be kept of all members of the public in attendance and it would be published online. Notice of the meeting had been published on the website prior to the meeting along with the agenda. The Chairman informed all attending that there would be a private section at the end of the meeting to discuss private Board business.

The Clerk informed the Board that Thomas McAughtrie would now be representing Dumfries and Galloway Council and that Board member Tom Brown had resigned.

The Chairman introduced Andrew Wallace from RAFTS and welcomed him to the meeting.

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes dated 27th August 2013 were considered and unanimously approved.

6. Matters arising

Action Points from the minutes of the previous Board meeting were addressed and the Fishery Director updated the Board on the incident regarding a net being seized on Kirkconnel Estate earlier in the year. It had been confirmed that NCFT do hold the title for the salmon fishing at that location and that following a meeting with the owners of Kirkconnel Estate no fishing for salmon will be exercised in the future at that location.

7. River Reports

Fishery Directors report – see Appendix 1

FD commented on the season stating that it had not been a good season on the Nith and that this was similar to other rivers across Scotland they having also suffered downturns in returning salmon catch statistics. Andrew Wallace endorsed the Fishery Directors comment that it has been a poor year for many rivers across Scotland but that it should be remembered that in 2010 most rivers experienced very high catches. There is an increasing uncertainty regarding the number returning of salmon and it is impossible to predict what is going to happen in any one year. The message is that rivers need to do whatever they possibly can to ensure that as many smolts go to sea as possible but a lot of the management of this resource is out of the hands of Fishery Boards and Fishery Boards have to do the best that they possibly can. When faced with a downward trend Fishery Boards should start thinking about conservation and tightening up on fishery management policy. Conservation and exploitation rates were discussed and it was agreed that overall fewer anglers had been fishing in 2013 than previous years. It was agreed that this topic would be discussed in greater depth later in the meeting.

Mining Operations

The Fishery Director updated the Board on mining operations within the catchment.

Hargreaves Surface Mining Ltd were about to move into the extension area at Glenmuckloch. During electrofishing surveys carried out in the summer it was found that there were three watercourses that were devoid of fish due to lack of water. Hargreaves has been informed of this and the Fishery Director has stipulated that when restoration is carried out the watercourses must be returned to their former status capable of sustaining fish. Mark Coombes requested that he would like to attend on site at Glenmuckloch at the next meeting to discuss the issues. He had been unaware of this issue until reading the FD's report.

At Greenburn Surface Coal Mine there are plans to divert the River Nith later in 2014. The new diversion channel has been planted with willows to stabilise the banks. The Fishery Director commented that following the financial problems experienced by Scottish Coal and ATH, regulations regarding the mining of coal had become far more stringent and the technical working groups overseeing the mining projects had more powers to control aspects of mining operations.

Meetings with Hargreaves regarding House of Water and the river diversion have been productive and they have agreed to continue with the monitoring regime carried out by the Fishery Director and Trust Biologist formerly instigated by Scottish Coal.

UDN update

Sandra Schlittenhardt, the Phd student who is conducting research into Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis (UDN) took samples from 22 fish when Board staff were capturing brood stock. So far very few samples taken throughout Scotland have been confirmed as UDN positive and it doesn't appear that the problem is getting worse. It was not possible to test for UDN in any of the dead fish taken from the Nith during 2013 as once the fish was covered in fungus it is impossible to sample for UDN. Sampling will continue next year.

Enforcement

The Water Bailiff team have been vigilant but there hadn't been any major incidents on the river. A two kilogram tin of Cymag was found on the upper Cairn. It had been seized and disposed of. It may have been intended for use in the river or for some other crime. The water bailiffs are currently concentrating on protecting the spawning beds in the upper catchment.

Hatchery

All the eggs that are required in the hatchery have been collected. D&G Angling Association were thanked for their assistance in the collection of broodstock.

Staff Attendance at Meetings

The Fishery Director attended at the following meetings

- Association of Salmon Fishery Board Executive meeting (in respect of which he is a member) regarding continuation of work on national strategies to improve salmon stocks. It is vital that the Board continues to be part of this group as fishery management across Scotland is reviewed.
- River Directors from across Scotland met in the Nith catchment in October. These meetings take place every 6 months. It is a useful forum to discuss national issues and assess what is happening in different rivers. Andrew Wallace stated that Rivers and Fisheries Trust of Scotland (RAFTS) and ASFB find it very useful to take sounding from these directors as they are representative Boards' interests.
- The Fishery Director continues to train police in Dumfries and Galloway and the number of training sessions has increased since Police Scotland was formed. There appears to be an increased awareness of wildlife crime with Police Scotland.

Website

A new website for the Board and Trust is currently being worked on.

Northern Periphery Project (NPP)

The NDSFB has been approached by Inland Fisheries Ireland to become a partner in an international project to track salmonids and investigate the influence that aquaculture is having on sea trout smolts. Other partners involved are from Northern Ireland, Norway, Iceland and Greenland. If the project application is successful it will result in some very interesting research being carried out into the movements of smolts once they leave natal rivers. The Board's involvement is due to its having been part of the Celtic Sea Trout Project and although some

people expected more from that project, the results of the CSTP are proving vital in the understanding of the movement of sea trout off the coasts. If the project goes ahead it could help further knowledge about sea trout.

Andrew Wallace stated that research does not produce any silver bullet answers and that currently there is more known about salmon than there is about sea trout. The SALSEA project managed to determine salmon migration routes very quickly. There is no idea about sea trout and why their populations fluctuate greatly. There are problems on the west coast due to sea lice and any research carried out needs to have a useful outcome. A practical result from SALSEA was that it is now known how important it is that there is control of the by-catch from the pelagic fishing fleet. It will never be possible to answer all the questions but these types of projects build on what is known to increase knowledge. The Nith's involvement will only cost the Board and Trust staff time.

Andrew Wallace informed the Board that Scottish Government is no longer providing much funding for Fishery Trusts and that the Nith should be trying to get grants to achieve the work that it wants done and think "out of the box" for example restoring habitat for other species which will also restore salmonids habitat and the Trust is ideally placed to do this.

The Fishery Director informed the Board that a new volunteer bailiff had been taken on.

The Fishery Director attended a stocking conference in Glasgow which was very informative and the general message from the conference was that stocking was not an effective management tool for enhancing salmon numbers. After having attended the conference he is reassured that the Board have the right number of eggs in the hatchery. The hatchery is a strategic reserve to fulfil coal mining requirements and guard against any major pollution incidents.

The recent article by Andrew Flitcroft published in the Trout and Salmon magazine regarding the number of salmon being captured by commercial fisheries in the Solway Firth was discussed. The Fishery Director stated that he had investigated the source of the information behind the article which claimed that there had been so many fish caught that the Environment Agency had been required to issue more tags. However on further investigation the Environment Agency stated that they had not been required to issue more tags. Haaf netters on the Nith were reporting low catches for the season and generally catches were low. Robbie Cowan and John Kingan confirmed that there were very poor catches in the Haaf nets for the Nith. Peter Hutchison from Douglas Hall fisheries stated that the run of salmon had just stopped in August as if a singular event happened and then it slowly came back by end of the season. The subject of carcass tagging was discussed and it is believed that the consultation document on carcass tagging should be issued at the end of the year. Hopefully tagging will be in place by 2015 at the earliest but assurances have been given that it will happen. The Board will be contributing to the consultation.

Mark Coombes enquired about predator control and if the Board would get a bigger licence allocation for Goosanders and Cormorants. The Fishery Director stated that an application is currently being put to Scottish Natural Heritage and that the Board may get more but it will not be significantly increased. Andrew Wallace stated that applying for large licences was a non-starter and it was the ability to maintain a licence to shoot some that was critical. There was very little that could be done when up against RSPB. Predators are not significantly driving the catch trends.

Trust Biologist's report – see Appendix 2

Electrofishing Surveys

The Trust Biologist updated the Board on the electrofishing that had been carried out during 2013, stating that good numbers of juvenile salmonids were being found in surveys. Peter Landale enquired about the number of electrofishing sites that had been surveyed. The Fishery Biologist stated that over 100 sites had been surveyed but that in order to give a representation of the health of the system 10 sites had been identified and would be surveyed on an annual basis and the data presented to the Board.

Fishing for the Future update

The Fishery Biologist informed the Board that the Trust had been successful in gaining funding for the Fishing for the Future project and that already 250 pupils and teachers had taken part in the project.

INNS update

The INNS project had been successful during 2013 and that nearly all of the Japanese knotweed in the catchment had now had its first treatment. All of the flowering Giant hogweed had all been treated along the stretch of the Nith but that more had been discovered on the Cairn Water and treated. Peter Landale enquired what impact Giant hogweed had on fish. The Fishery Biologist explained that Giant hogweed did not have a direct effect on fish but that it impaired access for anglers and posed a public health risk due to its toxic sap.

Signal Crayfish

Scottish Water had been approached regarding the disused facility at Lochfoot with the potential for it being used in some manner to prevent Signal Crayfish from moving further downstream. The Fishery Biologist stated that it was unlikely that the Board and Trust could ever totally prevent their spread downstream but that it may be possible to slow them down by installing an electronic barrier or changing the pH of the watercourse between Lochrutton and the disused water treatment works. The Fishery Biologist reported that Signal Crayfish had been found to be present in the neighbouring catchment of the Urr in the Buittle Reservoir.

Rafts Meeting

The Fishery Biologist informed the Board of a regional RAFTS meeting that she had attended and that funding all over Scotland is becoming more difficult to find and that it had been suggested that Trusts need to diversify in order to stay afloat.

SEPA report

Shona McFarlane reported that the sewage sludge operations at Carserig Farm were being formally investigated but that water quality samples have been taken and there didn't appear to be any negative effects. The Fishery Director enquired what the current status of water quality in the Nith was. Shona McFarlane informed the Board that there was a dedicated sampling officer who took baseline samples for any problems but that they are not seeing any problems on the ground. All of the mines, etc are sampled as part of their licence conditions and there are no non-compliance issues. This supported what the the Board and Trust were finding in their electrofishing data. Shona McFarlane requested that any problems that anglers experienced on the ground should be reported to the SEPA office in Dumfries as quickly as possible and offered to provide data for the Nith but that a lot of the data is now available on the SEPA website and interactive map. More information is to be made public and when someone is not complying with pollution law that information will be publically available online.

Shona McFarlane will include information on the sampling schedule for the tanks at Airds Point in her written report at the next meeting and will provide sample bottles for the Board and Trust.

8. Draft Fishery Management Plan

The Chairman introduced the plan and stated that draft copies had been set out and comments had been received. Some people felt that the document should be tightened up and have very specific targets. He stated that it is not a perfect document but it seeks to be inclusive of all of the issues. The Fishery Director stated that in the four years since the first Fishery Management Plan was written circumstances have changed i.e. in 2008, approximately 4500 salmon and grilse were caught and in 2012 just over 1500 were caught. Previously Management didn't deal with Invasive Non-Native species or have American Signal Crayfish in the catchment. Funding was also easier to get then. This is the second Fishery Management Plan and that knee-jerk actions should not be written into this plan without careful thought. Fishing must continue in a sustainable manner.

Peter Landale felt that the proposed plan does not cover the extent of the drop in the number of fish and that the Board has to control exploitation and that there are elements that should be brought out to make the plan stronger. The Fishery Director stated that catches had been down to this level before. The Nith is very low on the Catch and release table and that during the course of this plan it would be good to see it increased. The question is whether setting targets is the best way to go. Mark Coombes agreed with Peter Landale's comments and that targets have to be achievable and that if targets are not achieved then they should be explained.

The FMP had been discussed at the NCFT directors meeting the previous night and it had been suggested that a distillation of the plan should be produced to summarise the main objectives and that it should be distributed to anglers.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Board represents all interests on the river from anglers, netmen, landowners, etc and that everyone has to be able to buy in to the plan and it should be set out in a digestible manner. The Fishery Management Plan was discussed at length and the following points were agreed:

- Bailiffing should continue at present levels and that it would continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.
- That there are currently a number of conservation measures in place by individual beats, associations and netting interests along the length of the river and that it would be useful to know what everyone is doing.
- Catch and release rates needed to increase and it was considered a high priority.
- Reporting of each prescription needs to occur on an annual basis.

The Chairman stated that the plan was to give a framework and had to be flexible to be able to take into account anything that came along. Generally it was felt that there were areas of the plan that could be strengthened and that this should be tackled as the Board proceeded forward. The Chairman proposed that the plan was accepted as is.

Mark Coombes stated that he still has concerns that targets were needed. It was agreed that Peter Landale and Mark Coombes put together a list of items that they believed should be focused in on, particularly how they be reviewed and how performance be measured for the next Board meeting. The Clerk stated that it must be borne in mind that this is an all species plan and does not apply just to salmon and sea trout.

The Fishery Management Plan was approved.

9. Governance

All Board members were reminded that they should complete the “Declaration of Interests” form that had been sent out prior to the meeting and that it should be returned to the Clerk by the end of the year. A draft Complaints protocol now required by the new legislation had been distributed to all Board members. There were no adverse comments on the protocol and it was agreed to adopt and publish it on the Board’s website. Detailed minutes of every Board meeting now have to be published on the website. Andrew Wallace stated that all Interests should be included on the Declaration of Interests form as this had caused concerns with other Boards but that he would be happy to advise on the matter.

10. A.O.B

The Chairman thanked Andrew Wallace for attending. Andrew Wallace stated that he thought the Board was very tidy and was progressing well. He also stated that it was vital to RAFTS and ASFB that Nith have an ambassadorial and managerial function on the national scene and that it should continue to do so.

Peter Hutchinson enquired if there could be an initiative to provide metrics on the number of fish within the river. Andrew Wallace stated that this was a very difficult issue to solve and that counters were one way in which to try and assess the number of fish running the river but that they were very expensive. There are techniques being developed but this is at a very formative stage at the moment and it is unlikely that there will be any better techniques in the near future. Marine Scotland is currently carrying out research on marine survival of salmon in relation to marine renewables and there may be the potential to get a counter installed in the future.

Certain trends can be identified using long term data based on management techniques and the 10 year average is a good level to look at.

Peter Landale informed the Board that after the discussion regarding FishPal at the last meeting and the Board’s decision not to take FishPal on, a small group had been formed to promote Fishpal on the Nith. They had negotiated £1,500 per annum for the first year and are making the commitment to get the fish catch information onto the website. It is hoped that this becomes a bigger group but would require the support of the Board staff to be able to collect the information. The Fishery Director stated that the Board staff will do what they can to assist in providing information. Commitment will be required keep FishPal running and promoting the river in a positive light.

The Chairman then advised those attending that the Board members intended to move into closed session to discuss matter relating to Board finances and employment of Board Staff. He thanked Members of the Public for attending and they left the meeting.

Public meeting closed at 12.33pm

11. Draft Budget

The Chairman introduced the draft budget for the year 1.12.13 to 30.11.14 which had been distributed. The Clerk enquired if there were any questions regarding the budget. Consultancy is down partially due to work carried out that has not been billed for and will be received in the next financial year and a diversion of staff resources into other matters. The financial bond on House of Water OCCS with Scottish Coal was discussed. Money is due for NPP expenses in March 2014. Mark Coombes enquired what consultancy could be expected and was it reducing and how it was decided how much consultancy was carried out. The Fishery Director explained that precedence is given to the issues that have the most impact on the fishery resource and if that is a coal mine or a wind farm then priority will be given to these types of projects because they are most likely to have an adverse impact on the fishery. It is very difficult to give a firm amount as it could not be predicted how many companies will approach the Board requesting work to be carried out. There are certain monitoring works that are carried out annually and these are normally linked to long term contracts. Some work has been rolled onto to next year as the companies were too late in submitting requests for survey and commencement of their projects and the requested surveys would have extended into and adversely impacted upon the spawning season.

The bailiffing levels were discussed and the Fishery Director stated that although four bailiffs were patrolling the river and seven cameras were deployed along the length of river, no major incidents were observed. It was agreed that one seasonal bailiff would be taken on in 2014. It was agreed that Trust core funding support from the Board would to remain as is. There is an increase in the expenses due to the NPP and that will be claimed back in March 2014.

The Clerk advised that the Board had tried over the last few years to keep the rate in the pound for raising assessments at a near fixed level. The Board had agreed to fund a second seasonal bailiff from Consultancy Income. He suggested that this policy could not continue and that it would be necessary to budget on the basis of costs actually projected to arise during the course of the year and that the rate in the pound fixed should reflect the real cost of running the management of the fishery. It is harder to keep relying on consultancy to keep the Board functioning. There is a hole in the budget as a consequence of the drop off in Consultancy income combined with the decision to fund an additional Bailiff last year. The Clerk stated that in his view it would be necessary to increase rate in pound in line with inflation rates as expenditure is outstripping the assessment. The refund is built into the assessment and is shown as a discount. It was agreed that the rate in the pound be increased to £1.22.

12. Staff Salaries

FD advised that when David McMichael was first employed it was agreed that his salary be reduced until he undertook more training. He has now completed this training and it is recommended that his salary is increased by 10%. The Board agreed to this increase.

The dates of the meetings in 2014 are to be emailed to all Board members.

Meeting closed at 13.16

Appendix 1

Fishery Directors Report

Nith District Salmon Fishery Board Meeting Tuesday 10th December 2013

1. 2013 Season:

The 2013 season will not be remembered as one that produced large numbers of fish on the River Nith. Most rivers in Scotland shared the same fate. Our season started well with a few more spring and early summer fish and a reasonable number of sea trout. However grilse were all but absent and the traditional back end run was low. All Solway rivers shared these circumstances and a meeting has been arranged in mid-December for managers to discuss the issue.

2. Coal Mines:

Glenmuckloch – the mine has re-opened and machinery is moving. We have conducted our annual electrofishing surveys which confirmed that three streams now no longer sustain salmonid species of fish. The Crichton Burn, Roger Burn and the Lagrae Burn do not contain fish. The mine is under new ownership, Hargreaves in partnership with Buccleuch. I will be working with the new management to see if we can restore any of these watercourses to a condition that they can sustain Salmonids.

Greenburn – Kier continue to operate the mine at Greenburn and having successfully diverted a section of the River Nith during 2012, they are currently working on a second diversion. The channel is dug and the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust has planted trees along the course. The diversion will not take place until the summer of 2014. Fish surveys produced satisfactory results across the Greenburn site.

House of Water – This site is also under new management. Hargreaves has taken over and I have attended meetings with them which have been constructive. We monitored the site this year and fish populations in this section of the Nith remain strong. NDSFB are outstanding the cost of survey work conducted during 2012 and I am working with East Ayrshire council to recover those costs.

There has been a major shake up within the coal mining industry in Ayrshire. Planners would appear now to be scrutinizing all actions and works on site to ensure that commitments are met. The mechanism of the Technical Working Group is intended to be used more to ensure that actions are carried out.

3. UDN Update

Stirling University PHd student Sandra Schlittenhardt has been out in the field with us gaining samples for her research. We gave Sandra access to fish whilst we were catching broodstock and she took skin swabs. NDSFB has financially contributed to this research.

4. Enforcement:

Our Water Bailiffs have been vigilant all year and have dealt with incidents from the coast right up as far as New Cumnock. During November we were involved in the seizure of a large quantity of Cyanide. This had been hidden near a tributary and could potentially have caused considerable damage if used.

5. Hatchery:

I can report that we have obtained the ova that we require for our hatchery operation. Despite it not being a good year for angling fish were plentiful in the spawning tributaries.

6. ASFB:

I continue to represent the Nith on the Management committee of the ASFB. We are engaging with the media on a regular basis and it is important that the right responses are provided and that these are consistent across our sector. In my opinion at this time when there is a review of fishery management structures in Scotland taking place, the ASFB is vital.

7. River Directors Group:

NDSFB recently hosted a meeting of the River Directors Group. This is a group consisting of River Directors from across Scotland who work together to overcome issues of commonality experienced by many DSFB's. Prior to this meeting on the Nith the group visited Greenburn surface mine and we discussed planning issues associated with large scale construction projects.

8. Training

I continue to train police officers on the subject of fishery law and enforcement tactics. I have lectured to three groups of probations this year at police headquarters.

9. Website:

We are considering options for our new website and are working with a number of companies to compare and ensure that we get what we require.

10. Northern Periphery Project:

NDSFB are one of a number of partners applying to a European funding package to fund a project called Salmonids West. It is hoped that if successful this project could fund important research in the Nith catchment including radio tracking of our sea trout on their migrations. The process of applying for these funds are 100% financed.

11. Staff:

Our seasonal staff have now finished their term with the Board. Our seasonal team was supported by our volunteers and led by our senior Bailiff. The Bailiffs fielded many of the frustrations of disgruntled anglers during this fishing season when fish numbers were reduced.

12. Hatchery Stocking: All of our staff recently attended a conference in Glasgow which focused on the subject of stocking. Having heard the speakers I am assured that the NDSFB policy on stocking is correct and should be maintained.

Appendix 2

Biologist's report December 2013



2013 has been a very busy year for the Trust; unfortunately the river has not been as busy with fewer anglers being seen on the bank and low numbers of fish being caught up and down the river. The first half of the season was very quiet due to low water levels preventing fish from running the river and keeping them down in the lower part of the river. Once the waters rose, large numbers of salmon were seen running the river for a few weeks but then these gradually tailed off and never really picked back up for the rest of the season. There is concern throughout Scotland regarding the low numbers of salmon this year and it is not just a problem that we are experiencing in the Nith or Solway Rivers, other rivers throughout Scotland appear to having a bad run this year as well. This strengthens the general feeling that some of the main issues effecting returning salmon numbers are at sea rather than in the river.

Electrofishing surveys

All juvenile electrofishing surveys were completed in 2013 and from initial analysis the numbers of fry and parr within the catchment appear to be at healthy levels. Members of Dumfries and Galloway Angling Association joined us out electrofishing three times this year, twice carrying out juvenile electrofishing surveys on the River Cairn at Six Mile Corner and on the Dalwhat Water, and once out to capture adult salmon for broodstock on the Crawick Water. Their assistance is really appreciated and DGAA have volunteered to assist us with future surveying of the Cairn Water. It has also been agreed that a brief report be completed, outlining techniques and best practice to restore trout numbers in the River Cairn.

Fishing for the Future project

We have successfully gained EU funding from Dumfries and Galloway Fisheries Local Action Group and the Holywood Trust to proceed with the Fishing for the Future project. The project started in November 2013 and already over 253 children and adults have participated in Session 1 which includes a visit to the Trust education facilities. The participants were able learn about the lifecycle of Atlantic salmon and to see live adult salmon. The next 6 sessions will take place between January and July 2014 and include incubating salmon eggs, carrying out river surveys, fish dissection, fishing excursions and trips to the coast to learn about the aquatic environment and sustainability. Emily Iles has been employed to deliver the project.

Invasive Non-native Species Project

The fourth season of treatment for the Riparian INNS project has been completed and in total 86 stands of Japanese knotweed have been treated along the River Nith and Cairn (12840m² or 53,000 stalks injected) and 54km of river bank with Giant hogweed has been treated. For the first time skunk cabbage has been treated on the River Cairn although effectiveness of treatment was not as high as expected and re-treatment will be required in 2014. ScotRail have been informed of a stand of Japanese knotweed on the railway tracks near Auldgirth which they have agreed to treat. Three seasonal members of staff were taken on to carry out treatments this year, (9.5 months or 0.8 full time equivalents).

Signal Crayfish

Surveying for North American Signal Crayfish (NASC) was carried out in the early half of the season and no further sightings have been reported within the Nith catchment. Discussions are currently being held with Scottish Water regarding the potential use of their disused water treatment works at Lochfoot to trial some methods for preventing the downstream migration of crayfish. Unfortunately we have been informed by the Urr District Salmon Fishery Board that

NASC have been discovered in Buittle Reservoir in the Urr catchment. Trapping is being carried out under the supervision of Galloway Fisheries Trust to assess the number of crayfish present and so far 12 have been caught.

Website

- Two website design companies have been contacted to discuss a new website for the NDSFB and NCFT.

Meetings and Events attended August – December 2013

- RAFTS regional meeting – this meeting looked at the way RAFTS is communicating with its member Trusts and future funding sources. It is generally felt the RAFTS can play a bigger role in bringing Trust together and that this is important in gaining future funding. Grants are proving more difficult to get and there is a greater amount of reporting required. Projections for the next few years are unsure and unsecure making it difficult to make Trusts financially stable. It has been suggested that Trusts may need to diversify to stay afloat.
- Fishery Local Action Group meetings x 2
- Attended RAFTS AGM with Percy Weatherall and Jim Henderson – A presentation was delivered on the work being carried out by Marine Scotland on Marine renewables and about the research being carried out in the marine environment. We are still on relevantly un-known ground with this research and it highlighted how little we do know about the marine phase of salmon and sea trout.
- Northern Periphery Project Preparatory meeting– to meet with the Scottish, Irish, Northern Ireland and Norwegian partners to discuss Salmonids West project and identify work packages for the project.
- Northern Periphery Development workshop – to meet with Northern Periphery regional and desk officers to discuss and develop project application.
- SFCC committee meeting
- EU students YES (Young E Citizens for a sustainable European Coastline) project – an electrofishing demonstration was conducted for a group of European graduates who were visiting Dumfries and Galloway as part of the YES project to promote European coastlines and showcase examples of best practice for sustainable development.
- Celtic Sea Trout Project meeting – wrap-up meeting for the CSTP
- Environment Day competition winners hatchery visit – 3 families attended a hatchery visit after winning a competition run at the Environment Fair in March 2013.
- Met with Nick Beevers from Glasgow University to discuss the development of an inshore marine surveying protocol and the Trust's capacity for conducting future surveying.
- Presented at the Dumfries and Galloway INNS seminar held at the Easterbrook Hall. Over eighty people attended.
- Eleven hatchery visits from local schools
- Met with Simon Fieldhouse and Scott Green to discuss the reporting requirements for the EU grant for Fishing for the Future.
- Jim Henderson, Jim McKie and Emily Iles attended the IBIS stocking conference in Glasgow – this was a very important meeting and was very well attended. It detailed all of the current research on best practice regarding stocking salmon. The main issues highlighted were that hatcheries have limited success unless the river is virtually devoid of fish, we cannot be sure that we are not doing harm to wild stocks and hatchery reared fish are weaker the wild fish.

Training

- Debbie Parke and Emily Iles attended SFCC Global Information Systems training course – this was a free course run by SFCC to develop intermediate/advanced GIS skills and was specifically aimed at fisheries in Scotland.
- Emily Iles attended a free SFCC database course to enable her to be able to create databases for tracking projects and information gained through surveying.