

RESERVED
21st MEETING OF THE FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS
COMMISSION
held on
WEDNESDAY 10th DECEMBER 2003
at
LOUGHS AGENCY HQ PREHEN

Present

Board

Peter Savage (Chairperson)
Lord Cooke of Islandreagh (Vice Chair)
Tarlach O'Crosain
Joseph Martin
Jacqui McConville
Jack Allen
Keith Anderson
Andrew Ward

Loughs Agency

Derick Anderson (CE)
Stanley Thorpe
John Pollock
Gillian Simpson

Others

DR Walter Crosier DARD
Michelle Lestas Lestas Consulting
Glenn Thompson Streamon.com

1. Apologies

Siobhan Logue, Frank Feely, Pat Griffin, Dick Blakiston-Houston

2. Minutes of the 20th Meeting

The minutes were agreed

Proposed Jack Allen
Seconded Tarlach O'Crosain

3. Reserved Minutes

The reserved minutes were agreed and would be made available to the public through the Agency's web site.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. CE Report

5.1 *Salmon and Inland Fisheries*

5.1.1 *Foyle Area*

The CE provided counts recorded during 2003 these indicated that the counts on the Rivers Roe, Faughan, Mourne (Sion Mills) and Finn had all exceeded the adult escapement conservation limits, despite periods of no records due to lightening damage. The count on the Owenkillev/Glenelly system at Corrick had however been disappointing and he advised that CCTV validation equipment would be operational on this site for 2004.

Figures on the returns from the commercial fishery were also provided which indicated that the commercial catch was in the region of 33,000 for the 2003 season but that the Draft Net catch was significantly above average while the proportion caught by the Drift Net fishery was lower than normal.

5.1.2 Carlingford Area

Low water conditions had inhibited angling on the Whitewater River where reports that the run did not materialise until very late or even after the season had closed. The CE reported that Kilkeel Anglers had sought an extension of the season on this river but had been advised that no regulatory authority existed to facilitate such an extension.

5.1.3 Conservation and Protection Schemes

It was reported that the conservation and protection in-stream work, including improvement to the disabled angling stretch, was well under way on the River Roe. The work is being carried out by the Rivers Agency and will be finalised in early January 2004 approximately 25% under budget.

Business cases for further schemes are being prepared and the Board will be kept informed on their progress.

5.1.4 Regulation

It was reported that the Licensing of Fishing Engines (amendment) regulation which includes the licence fees for 2004 and previously approved by the Board had been progressed through NSMC Interim Procedures and was signed on 9th December 2003 taking effect from 1st January 2004.

5.2 Shellfisheries

A report was provided on the shellfisheries in both the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

In Lough Foyle the Mussel fishermen have been continuing to harvest decent amounts and no bio toxin restrictions have been in place in the

fishery in the past two months. At least one large dredger has been operating on any one day in the past month.

Harvesting of mussel seed has been continuing in line with allocations made to fishermen. Two periods of seed mussel fishing took place during November, with 4-5 boats taking part in the fishing. One operator was cautioned on three occasions by department officials for fishing outside allocated fishing times.

Oyster fishing has been slow and reports from Moville have shown that prices are down €1 kilo from the start of the season. The size of harvested oysters has kept steady at 3 inches or 60 gram since the beginning of the season

The public fishery for mussels in Carlingford Lough has been fished by seven to ten small boats harvesting roughly 25t per week. The mussels harvested have been of the small “bouchon2 type and are destined for markets in France and Holland. These have fetched prices in the region of €550t, with meat contents in the range 26-30%. Two larger dredgers have been operating in the Lough harvesting farmed mussels at a rate of 60t per week. These have been demanding prices between €800 and €1200t.

The Agency is continuing its Water Monitoring Program and is expanding the program to cover additional parameters that may have a role to play in shellfish life cycles. The Agency is currently in the process of setting up three new sets of handheld monitoring probes that will help make the sampling procedures both more comprehensive and more effective. These multiprobe systems will allow information to be collected at a greater number of sites and will allow rapid dissemination of results.

5.3 *Riverwatch*

Gillian Simpson gave an overview of the “Riverwatch” 2003 year and her proposals for the centre in 2004. It was suggested that a “Riverwatch Club” should be formed to encourage continued involvement and repeat visits.

5.4 *Personnel*

The CE reported with deep regret the death of Inspector Mark King who died on 1st December 2003 after a long illness. The Board asked that their sympathy be passed on to his family.

A vacancy had also arisen following Lorraine Totton’s (PT AA) resignation.

Recruitment for the EO1 Finance vacancy is underway with a closing date of 19th December 2003.

5.5 *Salmon Workshop*

CE reported on a very successful salmon workshop with 108 attendees. A report of the proceedings will be published in early 2004.

5.6 *Website*

The Board were provided with a printout of web hits since the web counter had been installed. Figures were very encouraging and further work on the site is proposed see para 15 of minutes.

5.7 *Finance*

The Board were provided with a summary report on the Agency's finance including income and expenditure for 2003. The printout was provided from the Sage system by cost centre and it is proposed to provide an update on the Agency's finances at each Board and sub committee meeting.

6. *Audit Committee Report*

Jack Allen Chairperson of the Audit Committee provided a report on the minutes of recent Audit subcommittee meeting held at Castle Building Stormont. The minutes of the audit committee meeting were proposed by Jack Allen and seconded by Peter Savage.

7. *Angling Development Plan*

A presentation was given by Michelle Lestas (Lestas Consulting) on the final draft of the Angling Development Plan. It was agreed to form a key group of stakeholders to oversee the operational implementation of the plan. CE to identify personnel from key organisations as soon as possible.

8. *Angling Fair*

The Board discussed the proposed Angling Fair and paper including costings provided by John Todd the Agency's Angling Manager. The fair has been provisionally arranged for the weekend of the 6th & 7th March and the board approved expenditure up to £10k and gave their approval to proceed on this basis. They also asked that the contact should be made with the local councils with the possibility of creating a partnership for additional attractions throughout the area.

9. *Interreg Application*

CE reported that the Agency were preparing an Interreg Application taking into account the proposals within the 5 year development plan. The Board agreed that the application should be submitted as soon as possible.

10. Marine Tourism Study

It was reported that the tender documentation for the Marine Tourism Study was being prepared by Procurement Agency and it was agreed that the selection panel would consist of Peter Savage who is a member of the Board of the ERCBG, Derick Anderson CE and B O'Hagan Chairman of the NWRCBG. Tendering to be completed by the end of January.

11. Pre Fisheries Abundance

A presentation was given by Dr Walter Crozier (DARD) on a proposed study of pre fishery abundance (PFA) management of the Foyle salmon fishery. This study will be in cooperation between the Loughs Agency, DARD, Marine Institute, INRA France and University of Glasgow. The proposal includes the creation of a scientific post for approximately three years based at the Loughs Agency HQ and would be filled by a post grad from university. The Board gave its approval to proceed on this basis with the finalisation of this proposal with a view to its submission to the Departments early next year.

Proposed Joe Martin
Seconded Andrew Ward

12. Reserved

13. Reserved

14. Reserved

15. Web Design

A presentation was given by Glenn Thompson (streamon.com) which is a web design company associated with QUB. John Pollock to draw up a web strategy that will be used for the tender process. It is estimated that the design of a website would be in the region of £10-£15k and this would include corporate, angling, tourism, shellfish and Riverwatch. The board agreed to proceed on this basis.

16. AOB

None

17. Date of Next Meeting

Date and venue to be arranged.