



## RIVER LOSSIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

### Minutes of Annual Qualified Proprietors Meeting

Held at Pitgaveny.

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 3pm.

#### Present

Crinan Dunbar (Chair) (CD), Mark Laing (ML), Tim Atkinson (TA), Poppy Houldsworth (PH).

**In attendance** Clare Walker (Minutes) (CW), Robert Laughton (RL), Sean Mclean (SM), Alister Taylor (AT).

		Action
1.	<b>Welcome and Apologies:</b> CD opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies were received from John Fielding, Tomas Christie, Willie Fraser and Roy Russel.	
2.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b> Minutes were approved. CW to publish on the FNLRT website.	CW
3.	<b>Matters arising not on the agenda</b>  RL and CW still need to arrange a meeting with Alasdair Kennedy.  John Fielding has confirmed that he would like to be co-opted onto the LDSFB as representative of the Dallas Angling Association, the Board approved.  RL has found some historic documents relating to the LDSFB including minutes going back to 1983. FNLRT will continue to store these in the FNLRT office on behalf of the LDSFB.	
4.	<b>Financial</b>  <i>Approval of Draft Accounts</i> - CW circulated the draft accounts for financial year 2023-2024. The accounts were approved.  <i>Assessment and Budget for 2025</i> – alternative funding sources are being explored to supplement the income from the levy. The Board agreed that the financial position of the Elgin AA is integral to the finances of the LDSFB, and it is important that they are represented during any discussions around setting the assessment levy, therefore, it was decided to arrange an additional Board meeting at the end of January 2025 that the EAA are able to attend in order to set the levy for 2025. This meeting will also be used to discuss other actions to improve financial measures, including the potential for marine fishing ticket sales to boost the EAA's membership/revenue.	CW
5	<b>Year 2024 Season Update</b>	

- **Catch** – The 2023 season was similar to previous years with low numbers of fish caught. Anecdotal evidence suggests more anglers fishing for Brown Trout, rivers can shift from sea trout to brown trout in response to environmental conditions.  
FMS are looking to propose that members move to 100% catch and release in light of the reclassification of Atlantic Salmon to endangered. The Lossie is already a 100% catch and release river for Salmon, due to its 'poor' grading but comments from Boards are being sought to feedback to FMS. FMS also wants to expand this policy to include Sea Trout. The current catch and release rates for Sea Trout on the Lossie are around 50-60%.  
Promotion of fish handling best practice remains a priority; FMS are in the process of developing some communications material for members to use.  
Work continues on the Findhorn to research the origins of Saprolegnia infections, the suspected new strain hasn't reached the Lossie yet, but this underlines the need to practice good biosecurity measures, particularly when moving from one river to another.
- **Juvenile Survey** – a general juvenile survey of the Lossie was carried out this year. 23 cores sites were surveyed plus 6 further sites as part of windfarm development contracts. Scales taken during the survey are being read at the moment and RL hopes to have a complete report in January. Initial findings are that Trout distribution was good, but Salmon distribution appears to be reduced. Several of the windfarm sites surveyed were in fully obstructed burns and contained unique Trout populations. This is an important discovery, and these fragile populations require protecting with Scottish Government and Developers being made aware.
- **Catchment Developments** – Monitoring for Clashgour windfarm is in place.  
Sediment removal for the Elgin Flood Alleviation Scheme is now complete.  
Works at Dallas substation were completed but there are plans to revisit the site for some minor remedial work which RL will keep an eye out for.  
SSE Speyslaw – Milton cable plans contain a couple of burn crossings; RL has submitted comments.  
Miltoduff distillery outflow pipe works are progressing.
- **INNS** – 12km of river from Kellas to Mayne Farm treated for Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed in 2024. At Bogside Giant Hogweed is good but there remains a large infestation of Japanese Knotweed which is difficult to tackle. Progress is good at Wester Manbeen with Giant Hogweed infestations greatly reduced and Japanese Knotweed largely removed. RL and Elise Cox (SISI) are in discussion with a drone company about the potential for using drones to spray treat areas which are difficult to access

	<p>conventionally and hoping to develop a trial on Kellas estate in 2025. The American Mink trapping network has been expanded across the 3 rivers during 2024, resulting in 24 captures, 1 of these was at Fogwatt.</p> <p><b>Bailiffing</b> – SM gave an update on bailiffing for the Lossie for 2024. There were not many incidents; some young people without tickets who were signposted to where to get ones; the harbour was busy, but no incidents reported. Evidence of fixed engines were found but none found in action.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Conservation Code 2025</b> The LDSFB Conservation Code was reviewed and approved. CW to publish on the website. CW to add an item on the agenda for January's meeting for a discussion on Catch and Release policy for Sea Trout and review of fishing season on the Lossie.</p>	CW
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Catchment Developments</b></p> <p>Covered in item 5.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>ML informed the LDSFB that RL will be retiring from FNLRT at the end of March 2025 and that FNLRT will be making an announcement regarding succession plans before the end of the year.</p>	
	TA left the meeting at 4:35pm	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Date of Future Meetings</b> January Board Meeting – tbc LDSFB AGM – Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 3pm at Pitgaveny LDSFB Meeting – Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 3pm at Pitgaveny LDSFB Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors – Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 3pm at Pitgaveny</p>	

With no further business CD closed the meeting at 4:45pm.