

Minutes:

NATIONAL SEA RUN SALMON COMMITTEE Tenth Meeting, 21st November 2019

10 am - 4 pm

North Canterbury Fish & Game Office, 595 Johns Road

Committee members present: Roy Knight (NZF&G Council) , Rick Boyd (Otago F&G Council) , Phillip Musson (North Canterbury F&G Council), Alan Brooks (South Canterbury Salmon Anglers Association), Matthew Hall (Central South Island F&GC), Larry Burks (New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association). Rob Roney (West Coast F&GC),

Others present: Mark Webb (Central South Island F&G), Ian Hadland (Otago F&G), Emily Arthur – Moore (support), Rasmus Gabrielsson (North Canterbury F&G).

1. Apologies

Ben Sowry (Nelson/Marlborough F&G Council), Steve Terry (North Canterbury F&G), Vaughan Lynn (Nelson/ Marlborough F&G), Dean Kelly (West Coast F&G), Zane Moss (Southland F&G).

2. Health & Safety

Roy Knight said there was a new gathering point in the event of an emergency which was the southern corner of the back car park.

3. Conflicts of Interest

Philip Musson declared a conflict of interest as a Fonterra Shareholder.

4. Update on the administration and enforcement of a potential Season Bag Limit for Salmon

There was some discussion as to whether the season bag limit proposal needed to go back to the regional Fish & Game Councils before going to NZ Council to progress further with the Minister. Mathew Hall said as it was a tool in the tool box available to the regions not a regulation change so it did not need to go to them. He said timeframes need to be set so as to keep it moving. He said it must be led by the salmon committee.

Phillip Musson asked whether a season bag limit, if implemented, would it be south island wide. He thought this would be best otherwise people would travel to areas that did not have it, such as the West Coast putting pressure on that fishery.

Rick Boyd said there was no reason to have consistency unless there was a reason to be consistent. E.g. avoiding impact on other rivers.

Alan Brooks said that he believed anglers would travel to fish if there were more permissive regulations in other areas.

5. Update from Mark Webb on the ongoing development of the Salmon Management Strategy for Setting Regulation Change

Mark Webb said he had been developing the adaptive management model. He had been looking at trends since 2000 as it did not work to include the 1990s. He said he had found a good stock recruitment relationship. He was applying the model to the Rangitata River to test it.

Mark said he would also like to put more data into the model, such as Kahawai schools, spring floods and the southern oscillation. He also wanted to get more data from the commercial fisheries on the red cod and barracuda catches. In addition Mark said we needed to work on an annual monitoring program to get some more information on sex ratios, sizes and ages etc. He thought this would be best collected from anglers and be from each of the rivers.

There was some discussion about applying to the Fish & Game research fund. Matthew Hall said it was important that any application to the fund be a complete package rather than bits a pieces of research. Roy Knight suggested that Mark Webb refine his ideas about what further data he needed for the model then take it back to the salmon committee and the committee would take the application to NZ Council for the research fund.

Mark Webb had presented his model to the workshop with both North Canterbury and Central South Island Fish & Game and that both regions were very supportive of the strategy.

6. Release of surplus commercial salmon stock.

Alan Brooks said there had been a lot of talk recently about fish releases having a negative impact on the fishery; that people are saying there is a massive problem with fish releases but where was the data?

Rick Boyd said the swamping of small populations of wild fish with large numbers of hatchery fish was a problem, but small releases of hatchery fish into large wild populations was not such a problem. He said wild fish had different selection pressures from hatchery raised fish.

Alan Brooks said anglers did not understand this and that it needed to be better communicated to them. Alan Brooks went on to say that he had seen affects of hatchery fish on wild fish in his time at McKinnon's Creek.

It was agreed that a letter be written to the chairmans of the Fish & Game regions stating that there is a risk with releasing surplus stock into the wild and that hatcheries should not be releasing salmon without permission from Fish & Game.

Mark Webb said that it should state "without express approval from Fish & Game" as there are some situations where it is desirable.

Update following the meeting from Richard Fraser a Senior Fisheries Analyst with Fisheries NZ

"Ocean ranching is a historical operation and is no longer possible under section 192A of the Fisheries Act.

Once fish are released into the wild a licensed fish farmer cannot then obtain the fish again from the wild unless they can satisfy section 192A of the Fisheries Act. The section specifies

where a farmer can acquire and be in possession of fish, seaweed and aquatic life. As salmon cannot be fished under a commercial fishing permit the species cannot be landed via a licensed fish receiver.”

7. Key concerns/ ideas that came out of the 2018 Salmon Symposium in Ashburton that may have not yet been considered by the NSRSC.

Mark Webb provided a list of all the issues and ideas raised at the symposium and the committee went through all of them to identify if action was being taken for each topic, and, if not, whether it should be. *This document will be available to the public shortly.*

Out of the symposium discussion the following topics were to be put on an agenda for future meetings:

- Coastal Policy Statement
- Nitrogen tolerances for salmon
- Breeding strategy
- Herbicide effects
- Restricting angling upstream
- Salmon stamp
- Status of salmonids
- Salmon in management plans
- Action Plans for spawning streams.
- Fish Screens

8. Update on the Fish Screen Policy

Jack Kos at National Office is currently working on this. He is waiting on some more information from regional staff and then will get a draft back to the regions for approval. To summarise the draft will go to the NZSRSC then to NZC then back to the regions.

Mathew Hall said it should be prioritised and should be back to the Committee for the next meeting in February. He also said we need to work towards having it in all out species management plans.

9. Discussion on how to progress with the National Hatchery Best Practice Guidelines.

There was concern that Fish & Game was in a vulnerable position without established best practise guidelines. Roy Knight said the committee should put to NZ Council that they should fund it. Rock Boyd said that we did not need national hatchery best practise guidelines; that it should be overseen by regional managers. He said the committee was trying to create a big job out of a small one. Roy knights said a lack of best practise guidelines puts the regions in a predicament; that minimum standards were needed otherwise it leaves NZ Council wide open.

Ian Hadland said that MPI was concerned about poor hatchery practices. He suggested amending one of the other guidelines, such as Eastern Fish & Game. He suggested this should go back to the salmon committee. He said record keeping was important.

It was decided that a policy or set of recommendations were written that outlined what needed to be in place for each of the hatcheries. The regions would then use this to guide them as to what needed to be included in any guidelines and/or SOPs etc that needed to be developed for their own hatcheries.

10. Put and Take Fishery – if and how to proceed?

Rasmus Gabrielsson said there needed to be a shift away from costly the supplementing of fish from hatcheries. That it is better to focus on improving the resilience of the wild fishery, and have an increased focus on reducing harvest.

Rasmus said put and take fisheries were okay to use if wild fish were used as brood stock and only raised for one year. Releasing them into the lower river is better. He was investigating a public private partnership.

There was some discussion about the best way to release fish so as to maintain the genetic integrity of the wild population.

Rasmus suggested inviting Robin Holmes from Cawthron Institute down to talk to the salmon committee. Roy Knight said that if they brought him down it would be good to have an 'open evening' and invite people from the fishing clubs and fishing stores.

Alan Brooks said communication around hatchery releases was critical.

Roy Knight put forward a motion that *"The NZSRSC make attempts to have an open night for stakeholders and invite Dr Robin Holmes of the Cawthron Institute to talk about salmon enhancement"* Phillip Musson seconded. CARRIED.

Mathew Hall said that the message that the salmon fishery was in crises needed to get out there. People outside of the fold don't know.

Rick Boyd suggested the open night be a symposium update.

11. Confirm Minutes of previous meeting.

Rick Boyd moved that *"The minutes from the 3rd September 2019 meeting be accepted.*
Seconded by Alan Brooks. CARRIED

12. Date and topics for next Committee Meeting

Next meeting: February 20th, 2020

Future agenda items:

- Open evening with Robin Holmes/ symposium update
- Coastal Policy Statement
- Nitrogen tolerances for salmon
- Breeding strategy

- Herbicide effects
- Restricting angling upstream
- Salmon stamp
- Status of salmonids
- Salmon in management plans
- Action Plans for spawning streams.
- Fish Screens