

Minutes:

NATIONAL SEA RUN SALMON COMMITTEE

Eleventh Meeting, 20th February 2020

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), Matthew Hall (Central South Island F&GC), Larry Burks (New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association). Rob Roney (West Coast F&GC), Ben Sowry (Nelson/Marlborough F&G).

Others present: Mark Webb (Central South Island F&G), Helen Trotter (Otago F&G), Emily Arthur – Moore (support), Rasmus Gabrielsson (North Canterbury F&G). Steve Terry (NC Fish & Game).

1. Apologies:

Alan Brooks (South Canterbury Salmon Anglers Association).

2. Health & Safety

Nothing to report.

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

Emily Arthur – Moore updated the Committee on the season bag limit. She said that the briefing paper and cabinet paper were being prepared and that it would be going to the Minister soon. Staff from NZ Fish & Game had met with Minister Eugenie Sage last year to discuss the matter. It was hoped the season bag limit would be gazetted before the next salmon season.

Mark Webb said he had put forward a paper with recommendations for the season bag limit. Helen Trotter said it might be optimistic to get in in time for the next season unless there was some movement in the next six weeks.

Mark Webb said how it is implemented was the next bit to put time into. He also said that the proposed Adaptive Management Strategy would not likely be ready in time for the next salmon season but that did not have to stop the implementation of a season bag limit.

5. Update on the Adaptive Management Strategy for Setting Regulation Change

Mark Webb gave a presentation to the Committee. In his presentation he looked at historic salmon runs, based on redd data (nests). He said the peak was late 40s to early 70s. He also said there was a misconception that salmon were getting smaller on average, but that was not what his analysis of the data revealed.

Helen Trotter asked if requiring catch and release had been considered. That this would be a level above a complete closure. Mark Webb said you would have to assume a level of mortality. That it was not something all anglers could do effectively.

6. Draft National Water Abstraction Fish Screen Policy

The draft National Water Abstraction Fish Screen Policy was considered by the group. Matthew Hall said the policy encapsulated most of the discussion that has been had. Rick Boyd said a practical approach was needed. That if one or two salmon were diverted that it was not a problem. Not a problem until it affects the population. Steve Terry said that if it was too ambiguous it would open it up for interpretation/ discretion by planners and that could be dangerous. Matthew Hall said it was the high level ideal that was what we should be working towards. He said he did not want the policy to be watered down.

Amendments were suggested to the draft policy.

Motion: Mathew Hall moved to accept the changes recommended by the group to the fish screen policy be accepted. Seconded: Rick Boyd. CARRIED.

7. Draft National Hatchery Best Practice Guidelines.

The draft guidelines were discussed. Some discussion centred around the requirements for qualifications for hatchery staff. Matthew Hall said he was concerned that if volunteer staff were required to have qualifications it could put them off.

Amendments were suggested to the draft policy.

Motion: Ben Sowry moved to accept the changes recommended by the group to the Draft National Best Practice Guidelines and that they be sent to the NZ Fish & Game Council with recommendations for it to be circulated to the regions. Seconded: Rick Boyd. CARRIED.

8. Minutes of previous meeting

Motion: Phillip Musson moved to confirm the minutes of the November 2019 NZSRSC meeting. Seconded: Rick Boyd. CARRIED.

9. Discussion on agenda items that came out of the 2018 Salmon Symposium.

Stakeholder update:

The idea of having an evening to update anglers on what the NZSRSC and CSI/ NZC Fish & Game had been doing since 2018 was discussed. Phillip Musson said it was important that the CSI/NZ Fish & Game played a major role in this. The Committee felt that late April/ early May was the best time to hold the event.

Motion: Rob Rooney moved that "The NZSRSC hold a follow up stakeholder update hosted by Central South Island and North Canterbury Fish & Game and by the NZSRSC." Seconded by Rick Boyd. CARRIED

Motion: Rick Boyd moved "That the NZSRSC recommends the stakeholder update be funded by the NZ F&G Council based on a budget prepared by the Chief Executives of the regions and the Chair of the NZSRSC". Seconded Larry Burke. CARRIED.

Action: That the Chair of the NZSRSC write to the Chief Executives of NZ & CSI Fish & Game asking them to work on the planning and funding of the event.

Salmon Stamp

The idea of establishing a 'Salmon Stamp', similar to the current Gamebird Stamp, was discussed at length.

The Committee members discussed several aspects of this suggestion, including how such a system would be received by anglers and the benefits it may have to salmon harvest surveys and environmental advocacy. Some discussion centered around if it, like the Gamebird stamp, should be used to raise some revenue, how any funds raised via a separate 'Salmon Stamp / Endorsement or Licence' should only be used. For example, should they be dedicated only towards habitat improvements, or if (and then to what degree) could such funds conceivably also be used to contribute toward salmon angler harvest surveys and/or salmon population monitoring?

Most committee members agreed that while the concept of a "Salmon Stamp / Endorsement / Licence" seems to have several advantages a formal proposal (or options paper) really needs to be developed before the topic can be fairly evaluated, and ultimately appropriately consulted on with regions and licence holders. It was proposed that the idea of a dedicated 'Salmon Stamp / Endorsement' could be raised at the planned April / May 2020 Canterbury Salmon Angler and Stakeholder update.

Breeding Strategy

Matthew Hall said there was some merit in developing a breeding strategy. Rasmus Gabrielsson said he was concerned not all the hatcheries had a policy on where to get eggs/ fish from. He would encourage all regions to have a breeding strategy. He suggested the Committee could ask the regions what they have done about a breeding strategy?

Mark Webb said McKinnon's Creek Hatchery was only breeding wild fish. They electric fished juveniles for future breeding. He said this was done as CSI Fish & Game did not want hatcheries taking spawning fish from the river.

Matthew Hall suggested that Mark Webb write a one page document about the evolution of the McKinnon's Creek hatchery.

Motion: Rob Roney moved that the NZSRSC write to the CSI/ NC and NM Fish & Game regions asking them to clearly articulate their breeding and release strategy. Seconded: Rick Boyd. CARRIED.

Herbicide effects on the salmon fishery

Larry Burke said the salmon anglers have challenged ECan about their spraying. He said with the braided riverbed spraying it's the side braids that bear the brunt. He said side braids were so important and the spraying was detrimental to the fishery.

Matthew Hall said he was concerned by the effects of the decaying plant material post spraying.

Rick Boyd questioned whether this was a topic for the Committee or whether it was more of a regional issue.

Restricting anglers upstream of the gorges

Matthew Hall said there was currently an angler petition about this and he did not think the Committee should get involved in it right now.

Status of salmonids

Matthew Hall said he was keen for habitat management plans and fish screen policy to be incorporated into Fish & Game species management plans.

Rasmus Gabrielsson suggested a South Island workshop on the status of salmonids and how to maintain or enhance it/ He mentioned the Lindis Environment Court decision wherein not recognising the status of salmonids led a poor/ absurd outcome for the river. He said there were groups that wanted to write Fish & Game out of existence.

Matthew Hall said we needed to think about it strategically and it was a great idea to meet. It would be a good opportunity to discuss how we can strategically beat this.

Rob Roney said he would like to back up Rasmus Gabrielsson on this topic. He said in the minutes from the NZ Conservation Authority it said they would like to get rid of salmonids from national parks. He said the issue was not going to go away.

Matthew Hall said the issue needed to be tackled head on. He also said that DOC had a function to manage salmonids.

Rasmus reiterated that a workshop should be held to discuss this issue. He said many groups were currently undermining the status of salmonids and failed to recognise the contribution of Fish & Game to conservation and recreation. He said we needed to organise a workshop to develop a strategy to deal with this. Rasmus also said he was concerned this was not being taken seriously enough by NZ F&G council.

Stream Action Plans

Steve Terry suggested Duncan Gray from ECan give a presentation to the symposium. Matthew Hall said the Committee should agenda stream action plans for a future meeting. Matthew Hall said habitat for salmonids had shrunk.

10. Matters Arising

Future of the NZSRSC

Rick Boyd said the Committee was about setting strategic direction. He thought all that was needed from now on was an annual meeting and an annual update for anglers.

Matthew Hall said he thought it was too early to lower to that frequency. He said that the Committee should leave the next meeting date until there was enough for a full agenda. He suggested the next meeting could be August.

11. Next meeting of the NZSRSC

The next meeting would be confirmed at a later date.

12. Actions Identified

- Draft National Water Abstraction Fish Screen Policy to be sent to NZ F & G Council for circulation to the regions. Complete.
- Draft National Hatchery Best Practice Guidelines to be sent to NZ F & G Council for circulation to the regions. Complete.
- Mark Webb to write a one page document about the evolution of the McKinnon's Creek Hatchery.
- The NZSRSC hold a follow up stakeholder update hosted by Central South Island and North Canterbury Fish & Game and by the NZSRSC in late May, early April.
- The Chair of the NZSRSC to write to CSI/ NZ Council asking that the regions prepare a budget for the stakeholder update and then the Chair of the NZSRSC write to NZ Council

recommending the stakeholder update be funded by the NZ F&G Council based on a budget prepared.

- The Chair of the NZSRSC write to the CSI/ NZ and NM Fish & Game regions asking them to clearly articulate their breeding and release strategy.