

## Salmon Aquaculture and Seals Working Group Meeting No 14

28 Aug 2014, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

**Attendees:** [REDACTED] SMRU (SN, Chair), [REDACTED] Marine Scotland (IW),  
[REDACTED] IAR(AK), [REDACTED] Marine Harvest (SB), [REDACTED] RSPCA (JA),  
[REDACTED] SPAG (AO), [REDACTED] HSI ( MJ), [REDACTED] SNH (CT), [REDACTED]  
SNH (JD) via VC, [REDACTED] Sainsbury's (AD)

**Apologies:** [REDACTED], Freedom Foods, [REDACTED], Scottish Salmon Company,  
[REDACTED], Hammond PR, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] CE

### 1. Opening matters

#### a) Introduction and Housekeeping

SN welcomed attendees to the meeting and provided a brief overview of the format for the meeting.

#### b) Adoption of Agenda and minutes of last meeting

Minutes from Meeting No 13 and Current Agenda (Meeting No 14) adopted.

#### c) Review actions (\*) from last meeting

**Outstanding Action Points:** Entanglement issues - anti predator nets – birds and seals are drowned in these nets and the Group had previously wondered whether there is any obligation to report such deaths back to Marine Scotland for EPS focuses on fisheries bycatch.

*(\*) SN to check with IW whether there is obligation to report deaths of birds or marine mammals in anti-predator nets back to Marine Scotland – discussions carried out between IW (Marine Scotland), CT and JD from SNH established that anti-predator nets are not widely used by the Aquaculture industry therefore are not perceived as being a major issue. IW added that Sea Mammals Stranding Scheme has developed to cover deaths caused by fishing gear extending this to seals also. IW also mentioned the importance of links with NGO's (especially the west coast) for beach monitoring.*

SN – according to Freedom Foods not many farms are using anti-predator nets and not much record of an issue therefore, **no need for an official scheme**. Group don't want this to be used as a solution if it leads to more incidental deaths.

IW - Marine Scotland survey already asks why not using anti-predator nets. He suggested this could be elaborated to get more info on past entanglements.

**AP: IW/OR to take this further with MS-LOT and discuss the possibility of adding more detail to survey question on reasons for not using anti-predator nets.**

*(\*)SB to look at when MHS trials started and when they finish and report back to the group – action point taken under current agenda AOB*

*(\*)SB to invite net manufacturers to a meeting - no results so far*

*(\*)SB & JW will attempt to discover which salmon farm companies have agreed to test the new startle response ADD – Overtaken by the PDF files circulated by SN (?)*

*(\*)SB to contact Airmar to see if they have any plans to introduce a testing device – Completed – the results look promising.*

*(\*)JA to speak with [REDACTED] (FF) about discussing testing devices with [REDACTED] and fish farms – carried forward – no reply as yet.*

*(\*)SN suggested that the group should write to ADD manufacturers to ask what steps they would be taking to ensure that operators can check their devices are producing the intended acoustic output – on current agenda – Completed.*

*(\*)AO and JA to draft letter, SB to supply contact details for manufacturers to JA – Completed*

*(\*)SN to ask SNH for a list of which salmon farm sites have been refused permission to use ADD's*

Marine Scotland survey already asks why ADD's not used. CT (SNH) suggested a cross-check against their policy with Marine Scotland or where SNH have refused use of ADD's ( if SNH have indeed prohibited use of ADDs at those sites who specify this in the survey). JD suggested this info could also be obtained through the annual fish farms survey.

**AP: Marine Scotland (IW & OR) to refine questions in the fish farm survey and follow up with JD.**

*(\*)SN to report at next meeting on continued analysis of existing data with a view to determining efficacy of Add's.*

**AP: JW to ask SSPO if they are using ADD's and if not why not.**

*(\*)SN to talk to IW on flow of analysis of data from Seal Licence Scheme – Completed – The data from the survey has been analysed by Marine Scotland.*

**AP: SN to follow up with OR on data analysis.**

(\*)JA to ask [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED] to come to the next meeting to discuss what procedures were in place either before or after a seal had been shot as a last resort to try to find out why non-lethal measures had been ineffective in each case.

**AP: JA to remind new Freedom Food members to get hold of info why seals have been shot and the reasons why other anti-predator methods have failed (?)**

(\*)*Clever Ideas Award* – Group members agreed this is a very good idea and should be continued.

**AP: AD to speak with JW and take forward**

**2. Work Plan review** – Where have we got to, where are we going and how can we get there?

**a) Conclusions of the sub group that met in March**

SN presented the conclusion drawn from the sub-group meeting in March. The discussion focussed on how to persuade other companies to adopt non-lethal predator control strategies and reduce the level of lethal removal.

SN – discussions with Shetland – not keen to engage with SASWG but doing some good work, e.g. deploying 'Econets'. One company with several sites has reported good results (no seal attacks recorded).

JA suggested looking at what other countries are doing – e.g Australia.

**AP: JA to find out from Aquaculture regulators in Australia**

**AP: All to use international contacts to get info from elsewhere.**

**AP: SN to insert the ADD points in the workplan and circulate to the group.  
Members to express their views on ranking of workplan by end of September.**

**b) [REDACTED] (confidential)**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**c) “Startle response” Add trials ongoing...?**

Testing is thought to be taking place in Orkney. JD confirmed she has been approached about scientific use of ADD’s in this area.

AD will be meeting startle response developer this month.

**AP: AD to give feedback to members after the meeting.**

**d) Presentation by SNH on EPS licensing and their approach to ADD’s**

Group members – should existing farms be applying for EPS licences. Can we quantify how many EPS licences are in place for fishfarms?

**AP: IW to check with MS-LOT how many fish farms (if any) have applied for an EPS licence so far?**

EPS licences for other uses (e.g. MR) – how often are these refused. SNH are currently developing more specific guidance with Marine Scotland on different ADD devices (in relation to EPS guidance/ cetacean risk assessment)

**e) Results of survey of ADD manufacturers – document provided**

SN circulated a document comprising the results of the survey of Add manufacturers.

**AP: SN to ask [REDACTED] if Ace Aquatec has begun investigations on continuous use of ADD’s (..?)**

**f) Update on the acoustic testing stick**

**AP: JA to prompt [REDACTED] to discuss with [REDACTED] how to catalyse and test efficacy of the acoustic testing stick.**

**AP: AO to contact JG**

**g) Electric netting**

SN will hear from his contact soon and inform the group (...?)

**3. Other issues**

**a) Seal licence returns**

IW confirmed the drop in number of seals shot under licence (both aquaculture and netting in rivers) and discussed the different reasons why this has happened.

IW informed the Group that Marine Scotland has decided to stop publishing information on seal killings under licence at the level of individual company and specific location. The information on regional level in an anonymous form continues to be available on Marine Scotland (Seal Licensing) webpage. FOI Commissioner is currently reviewing her decision to release the info.

IW – recent incidents may deter people from being in licensing scheme.

**AP: IW to inform the Group about any changes in this position.**

SN suggested that a visual presentation of the seal returns would be beneficial. IW mentioned to all group members that a number of graphs are now available on the seal licensing page.

**AP: IW to circulate links to the graphs.**

**b) Web pages**

SN asked group members for their opinion on the group's web pages. Group said they are happy with the website in general, however a few issues were brought up by some members:

AO identified a few problems/ typos on the "Activity Page" . He mentioned there is not enough visual info on the web pages.

**AP: AO to send comments to [REDACTED] (FF) (?)**

AD raised the issue that there is not enough industry representation in the group and more attention should be given to how the "industry views" will be presented on the website.

**AP: SN to add SB and JA views on the website - What was the group's contribution in reducing seal shooting and best practice (...?)**

**AP: SN to collect comments from all group members (including those not present at the meeting)**

**AP: JD to collect comments from SNH members/ contacts.**

**4. AOB**

IW - Seal Forum to be reviewed. This may have implications for this group.  
Membership discussion: SASWG will feed into the forum.

5. **Next meeting** to be arranged by Doodle, with suggested dates centred around January or February 2015.