

## Seal shooting: Key issues to address and consider taking forward

### Funding

1) How do we go about managing funds for getting research done?

- Possible routes – use RSPCA as a front for funding – to hold funds on an ad hoc basis
- See if SASWG itself could be a funding body – what legal admin constraints
- SARF – possible links – could we co-opt them
- ***Best option may be to fund a PhD studentship (an experienced candidate is available) – which would have advantages of :***
  - a) probably being cheaper than commissioned research
  - b) enabling one person to get to grips with several issues at the same time

### Other issues

2) **Carcass collection** – can we improve the carcase collection scheme – but maybe via Marine Scotland?

3) **Investigative team** - What do we do to investigate promptly when high levels of damage occur at a site precipitating shooting.... who will or can investigate and how? What resources are needed or available? What are the constraints?

### Research topics

4) Analysis of data on damage and shooting

- Company records - analyse data going back years (don't forget effect of lights)
- Ongoing data collection / interviews by FF / RSPCA
- Licencing scheme data from Marine Scotland
- Feedback from companies about other approaches e.g. Econet

Explore funding some research analysis on each and all of the above areas by, or in co-operation with, Industry / RSPCA / Scot Gov.

5) **Cameras on site** - Get cameras on sites with problems to find out more about seal behaviour. This would require complete cooperation from industry and would need to address any industry concerns about footage of seals damaging fish, but there are ways of doing so.

6) **Net trials** - Do more trials in the SMRU seal pool to explore how different netting materials affect the ability of seals to take fish from behind them (e.g. net stretchiness or how easy it is to manipulate) -

7) **ADD testing stick** – explore this further and get a better prototype developed for wider use.

8) **Electric fields** - Possible further work either testing or developing deterrent

7) **Taste or texture aversion** - Can we make nets taste or feel bad enough that seals do not want to touch them.

8) **Computer modelling** – to look at net design, deformation and tensioning

(9) **Seal trap** – develop a seal trap and possible relocation programme, tagging and release to see if animals return. Trial would mean zero kills and possibly offer solution to predation issue as habituated seal most likely to be caught and removed. Thought needed re lactating females, however capture may per se deter further attacks

(10) **Other countries** - What's going on in other countries –something the aforementioned student could undertake as part of a PhD programme? Methodical search required – personal contacts needed. This work would be best focused on countries that do not allow lethal control.