



The Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre

Annual Report 2004 – 2005

March 2006

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SFCC Annual Report 2004 - 2005

1. SFCC Background

The Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre (SFCC) is an association of Fisheries Trusts, District Salmon Fishery Boards, Fisheries Research Services (FRS) and the Scottish Executive which was established in 1997 to assist its members to collect, collate, use, and provide information on salmon and freshwater fish, their habitats and fisheries. To these ends the SFCC:

- provides a mechanism for local fisheries managers and biologists to standardise aspects of data collection;
- promotes and undertakes development of skills;
- promotes the development of specialist software in a cost-effective way;
- co-ordinates the collection of spatially related fish and habitat data in order to assist decision making;
- provides a mechanism for scientific analysis of fish and habitat data to inform the development of our understanding of the relationships between fish and their environment and fisheries science;
- provides a forum for sharing practices and experiences and a mechanism for pooling resources;
- encourages discussion of fisheries science and management in a forum informed by the best available information;
- provides as appropriate, fish and fisheries data at local, regional and national scales to inform policy decisions.

The SFCC is an unincorporated voluntary association with an agreed constitution. The members of the SFCC on 7/12/05 are listed in Section 12.

2. Chairman's Report

To paraphrase the old Chinese curse, the SFCC has had the (mis)fortune to have been born and to have had to mature in interesting times from a freshwater fisheries perspective. No sooner had the fledgling organisation begun than the Scottish Parliament, with its commitment to address a whole series of issues of particular national concern, and a series of Directives from Brussels, with profound consequences for freshwaters and freshwater fish, began to make their presence felt. Despite the resultant uncertainties and hugely increased pressures of work no one would deny that the actions are for the betterment of our freshwater environment.

The early years of the SFCC were focused on extending geographic coverage by Fisheries Trusts and District Salmon Fishery Boards, in developing protocols for electrofishing and habitat data collection and storage, and in developing and providing training. Recent years have been dominated by the organisation proving itself through undertaking a series of large contracts with SEPA and the SNH, which have helped established baseline ecological conditions of Scottish fresh waters and the status of Atlantic salmon in Special Areas of Conservation. As a result various aspirations of members have sometimes had to take second place.

The pace of change continues. The past year has seen the formation of the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS), a body which grew out of the Association of West Coast Fisheries Trusts and which represents Fisheries Trusts and Foundations throughout Scotland. In England and Wales - and we like to think following Scotland's lead - the Association of Rivers Trusts (ART) is now flourishing. The Scottish Freshwater Fisheries Forum, set up by the Scottish Executive (SE) in June 2004, has proved a productive debating chamber on the issue of how to re-shape freshwater fisheries management in Scotland to make it fit for purpose for the 21st century. The Forum has also been a driving force in the drafting of the new Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill, soon to go out to public consultation. Amid this welter of changes, the SE decided to take stock of its support of the SFCC and commissioned a review of its remit and

relationships with other fishery bodies. The review, which is being conducted by Hull International Fisheries Institute consultants, will report early in 2006.

It is against this background that I report. This is the first SFCC Annual Report, something that the organisation has always had aspirations to produce but had been too busy in the past few years to deliver. Highlights of the past year include the increase in SFCC membership, the securing of the BGS Geological dataset, the completion of the SNH salmon SAC assessment, and the development of the catch database, about which more later.

Like any such organisation, the SFCC is dependent upon the financial support, and support in terms of time and energy and general goodwill, of a large number of organisations and individuals. As Chair of the management committee, I would like to especially thank:

- Hilary Anderson, as Development Officer, who has in the past year delivered on a number of important issues and done much to organise the annual cycle of meetings and reporting;
- Jason Godfrey, as Fishery Scientist, whom the SFCC has been able to employ for this year as a result of the contracts, and who has done sterling work in support of the SNH and RAFTS contracts;
- Sandra Gray, Treasurer, who finally took over from the long-suffering Andrew Wallace in the spring;
- Members of the Management Committee, who have given of their time and effort to try to steer the work of the organisation;
- All those involved with electrofishing and habitat training courses, especially Bob Laughton, Jamie Ribbens, Jackie Graham, Steve Burns and Hilary Anderson, as well as Sarah Bayley and Jill Webb of Inverness College and Don Paterson of Barony College.
- Members of the protocol Review groups, who have given their time to considering changes and additions to the data collection process.
- Those who contributed to the successful winter meeting in December 2004.

A number of organisations also helped and supported the SFCC over the past year - especial thanks to the following:

- SEERAD (for financial support);
- FRS FL for office, GIS and computing support (David Tulett, Ed Christie and Eric Henderson are singled out here);
- Management Committee co-optees for their time and input to the SFCC work programme (in particular Ross Gardiner, Alastair Stephen and John Webb).

Without the material, financial and moral support of the membership and its supporters the SFCC would be unable to function.

3. SFCC Protocol Reviews

At the December 2003 biologists meeting, it was agreed to undertake reviews of existing SFCC electrofishing and habitat survey protocols and to investigate methods available for larger water bodies. The aim of the review process is to identify areas in existing SFCC protocols which may require updating, expansion or change, and where possible to make recommendations about other survey techniques. Questionnaires were produced in early 2004 and completed by SFCC members to inform the Electrofishing and Habitat reviews, and the three Review Groups have made substantial progress to date.

Electrofishing Review

The Electrofishing Review group is examining the existing SFCC electrofishing protocol, database and training material and collating information on a number of electrofishing issues. The aim is to revise and extend the existing SFCC protocol, database and team leader training material and to produce recommendations and guidance notes on some aspects of electrofishing.

Feedback from the electrofishing questionnaire and from training courses provided the basis for areas requiring discussion and clarification. It has been agreed that the protocol and database should be extended to include timed electrofishing methods and more detailed recording for non-salmonid species.

Topics being reviewed by the SFCC Electrofishing Review group include:

- Electrical output and water conductivity
- Conductivity meters
- Anode / cathode size relationships
- Stream width and number of anodes
- Electric field testing
- Equipment specifications, suppliers and servicing
- Use of banner and hand nets
- Scale sampling
- Anaesthetics
- Survey design
- Population density estimates – Zippin versus Carle and Strub methods
- Timed fishing methods
- Non-salmonid species data recording
- Existing electrofishing data and database issues
- Training issues, particularly health and safety

Habitat Review

The Habitat Review group is examining the existing SFCC habitat survey protocol, database and training material and identifying possible alternative survey methods and data recording. The aim is to revise and extend the existing SFCC protocol and training material, and to provide input to a database upgrade which will allow more efficient data collection and reporting.

Again feedback from the habitat questionnaire and from training courses provided the basis for areas of discussion. There is concern among the SFCC members that the time and cost of collecting detailed habitat information might not be justifiable from the limited use being made of the data. To address this, the review group agreed that a short 'walkover' method should be included in the SFCC protocol. Use of pocket data recorders with mapping facilities could also potentially significantly reduce data collection and data transfer costs and improve survey reporting. However, final decisions on changes to the existing protocol, data collection and database will not be made until after a UK-wide habitat workshop, which will be held in March 2006.

Topics being reviewed by the SFCC Habitat Review group include:

- Habitat survey methods currently used within the UK
- Walkover survey methods
- GIS and mapping
- Aerial photography
- Habitat data relating to non-salmonid fish species
- Existing habitat data and database issues

Large Water Bodies Review

The Large Water Bodies Review group is collating information on methods used to survey still waters and large rivers. The aim is to produce short guidelines on each technique, identifying methods in use, what information can be recorded, the difficulties of each technique, the advantages and disadvantages of use for different purposes, and relevant reading references.

For some techniques, the effectiveness is not fully clear and many have resource implications. Some methods have existing Environment Agency guidelines and/or CEN standards and the EA is currently reviewing some methods with a view to producing guidelines or protocols. The Review Group has recommended that the SFCC should not produce protocols at this stage, but it may be able to use EA guidelines if these are appropriate to Scottish conditions.

Techniques being reviewed by the Large Water Bodies Review group include:

- Gill netting
- Seine netting
- Hydroacoustic surveys
- Trapping
- Visual surveys (snorkel / scuba)
- Electric fishing in large rivers and littoral zones of lochs
- Rod and line – catch database
- Remote operated vehicles (ROVs)
- Opportunistic data (eg investigating fish kills)

The group is also discussing areas where training would be useful to SFCC members (particularly on coarse fish) and several suggestions may be taken forward:

- Coarse fish identification training
- Waterproof coarse fish identification cards
- Practicalities of site selection and net setting (gill and seine netting)
- Identification of internal parasites

4. SFCC Training

A total of six Electrofishing and Habitat survey courses were run successfully between April and August in 2005, the Scottish Vocational Qualification Level II / Introductory Electrofishing course being run through Inverness and Barony Colleges. Assessment procedures for the Electrofishing Team Leader and the Habitat survey courses were developed to provide more standardised assessment of participants.

The Electrofishing Team Leader course is being revised and will be trialled as an SVQ Level III course in 2006. The Habitat course will not be run in 2006 but will be revised for 2007. A number of training issues, including refresher courses, future trainers and post course assessors, will be addressed in 2006.

Provisional dates for 2006 courses:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| • Electrofishing SVQII | 26 th – 28 th April | (location Inverness) |
| • Electrofishing SVQII | 31 st May – 2 nd June | (location Barony) |
| • Electrofishing TL/SVQIII | 13 th – 15 th June | (location Strathcarron) |

5. SFCC Databases

The Habitat and Electrofishing databases contain a nationally important collection of information, and are a cornerstone of the SFCC. The data they contain may become even more important in the future. It is therefore crucial that they are maintained to the highest standards in terms of both data quality and security. To this end members submit data annually to the SFCC at Faskally where the data are added to the central database, following a thorough quality control process.

Despite ongoing upgrades over the years, a number of issues with the Electrofishing database have become apparent during recent work, and SFCC staff are in the process of addressing these together with the database developer. There are both major and minor structural issues affecting the user-friendliness of the database and its scope. Additionally, it is intended that timed electrofishing data should be recorded within the main database and that data collected for non-salmonids should be expanded. First drafts of necessary changes will be completed shortly, and it is hoped that the database developer can begin work early in 2006.

The Habitat Database is likely to be overhauled over the next year, following recommendations from the Habitat Review Group and a UK-wide habitat workshop which is taking place in March. It is hoped that the database can be fashioned in a more flexible structure: a tiered system that can accommodate the range of different types of habitat surveys that members undertake. This

would give members the option to carry out a survey at the level of detail they choose, whilst still allowing all surveys to be compatible at the simplest level.

The new SFCC Catch Database, for use by individual anglers, is on the verge of completion. A number of non-technical aspects remain to be agreed: how it should be distributed, whether or not it should be free, what type of IT support will be provided, and how to address questions of data ownership.

6. GIS

The SFCC provide support to members running ArcView GIS systems by supplying digital datasets suitable for mapping and by assisting with training in data use. SFCC organises and carries the cost of licensing datasets where necessary.

As well as basic river catchment data, two new licensed datasets have been acquired and distributed: rivers data from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and geology data from British Geological survey (BGS). In 2005 access to a more user friendly version of CEH rivers was arranged with SEPA.

7. SNH Contract

The Site Condition Monitoring for Atlantic Salmon SACs contract with SNH was signed off in March 2005, and the SFCC has received the full amount which was agreed for the work from SNH. However, because not all the sites were able to be electrofished last year the SFCC agreed with SNH to provide the absent data this year, and to incorporate it into the final report.

Other than for the Borgie, all the missing data was collected this Summer/Autumn, and the additional information is being included in the report, along with the necessary amendments to the analyses. In advance of these final changes, SNH have welcomed the report and are intending writing to thank all involved.

SNH will be using the information from the Site Condition Monitoring contract plus other information provided by SFCC members, in its assessment of the current status of each Salmon SAC.

All members involved in the data collection will be able to comment on the final draft and receive copies of the final report itself.

8. FAME Contract

The European Fish Based Assessment tool, known as FAME, that is regarded as important to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, has not yet been applied in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland. Early in 2005, SEPA approached the SFCC about the possibility of using SFCC data for developing and assessing FAME for use in Scotland.

Hull International Fisheries Institute (HIFI), the body involved in the development and implementation of FAME south of the border, was asked to submit a tender to SNIFFER for assessing it's utility in Scottish river conditions, in collaboration with the SFCC. It was originally expected that this would eventually translate into a few days' work for most of the SFCC biologists, chiefly the provision of expert opinion about electrofishing sites and river systems, in October 2005. However, adequate funding has not yet been secured.

9. Workshops and Meetings

2005

27 th January	Management Committee, Faskally
31 st January	Electrofishing Review Group, Faskally
1 st February	Habitat Review Group, Faskally
1 st February	Large Water Bodies Review Group, Faskally
2 nd March	Electrofishing Review Group, Faskally
3 rd March	Habitat Review Group, Faskally
3 rd March	Large Water Bodies Review Group, Faskally
20 th April	Electrofishing Review Group, Clunie
20 th April	Large Water Bodies Review Group, Clunie
28 th April	Management Committee, Faskally
28 th July	Management Committee, Faskally
17 th November	Management Committee, Faskally
7 th December	AGM, Faskally
7 th & 8 th December	Biologists Meeting, Faskally

2006

24 th January	Management Committee, Faskally
30 th March	Management Committee, Faskally
29 th June	Management Committee, Faskally
26 th October	Management Committee, Faskally
13 th December	AGM, Faskally
13 th & 14 th December	Biologists Meeting, Faskally

10. SFCC committee 2004-5

Malcolm Beveridge	Chairman	(FRS FL)
Sandra Gray	Treasurer	
Alan Kettle-white	(Argyll Fisheries Trust)	
Simon McKelvey	(Conon DSFB)	
Iain McMyn	(Kyle of Sutherland (DSFB))	
Willie Yeomans	(Clyde River Foundation)	
John Armstrong	(FRS Freshwater Laboratory)	
Manson Wright	(SEERAD)	

11. SFCC Membership at 7/12/05

Full Members

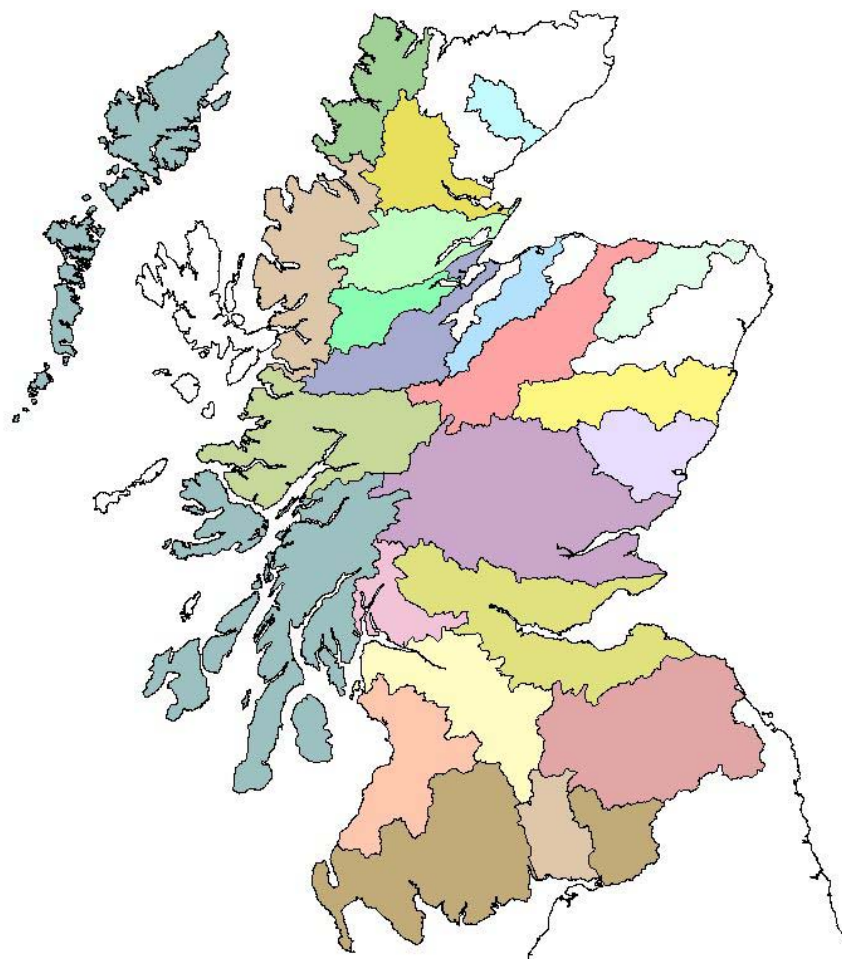
Annan DSFB
 Argyll Fisheries Trust
 Ayrshire Rivers Trust
 Beaulieu DSFB
 Clyde River Foundation
 Conon DSFB
 Dee DSFB
 Findhorn DSFB
 Forth Fisheries Foundation
 Galloway Fisheries Trust
 Kyle of Sutherland DSFB
 Lochaber Fisheries Trust
 Spey Research Trust
 Tay DSFB
 Tweed Foundation
 Western Isles Fisheries Trust
 Wester Ross Fisheries Trust
 West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
 FRS Freshwater Laboratory
 Scottish Executive

Associate Members

Esk DSFB
 Deveron DSFB
 Helmsdale DSFB
 Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust
 Ness DSFB

Honorary Members

Association of Salmon Fishery Boards
 Scottish & Southern Energy
 University of Durham



12. SFCC Profit and Loss Statement

Financial Year April 2004 – March 2005

Ordinary Income/Expense**Income**

Members Subscriptions	18,000.00
Associate Members Subscriptions	4,000.00
Bank Interest	834.76
Training Course Income	2,750.00
Spatial Data License Income ¹	4,021.56

Total Ordinary Income	29,606.32
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Expense

Staff Office and Overheads ²	0.00
Staff Salary ³	0.00
Travel and Subsistence	1,794.13
Capital Items/Depreciation ⁴	1,517.00
Insurance	630.00
Database Development	3,520.00
IT Support	1,982.50
Spatial Data License ⁵	12,460.34
Meeting Expenses	301.90
Postage and Delivery	14.00
Professional Fees	
Accounting	500.00
Professional Fees - Other	1,150.00
Total Professional Fees	1,650.00
Interview Expenses	645.15
Training Course Expenses	3,795.64

Total Ordinary Expense	28,310.66
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Project Income/Expense**Income**

Project Income ⁶	50,815.20
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Total Project Income	50,815.20
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Expense

Project Costs	
Staff Salary	22,311.50
Travel and Subsistence	398.05
Project Costs - Other ⁷	23,848.58
Total Project Costs	46,558.13

Total Project Expense	46,558.13
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Total Income	80,421.52
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Total Expense	74,868.79
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Net Income	5,552.73
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¹ FRS 50% share of Spatial Data License expenses for period 20/08/04 – 19/08/05

² Staff Office and Overheads provided by FRS Freshwater Laboratory

³ Development Officer Salary paid by SEERAD

⁴ Staff computer

⁵ Spatial Data License expenses for period 20/08/03 – 19/08/04

⁶ SNH SAC contract

⁷ Payment to SFCC members for work under SNH SAC contract

13. SFCC Balance Sheet

Financial Year April 2004 – March 2005

31st March 2005**ASSETS****Current Assets**

Current / Savings			
HSBC Current	11,926.34		
HSBC Deposit	<u>17,496.24</u>		
Total Current / Savings		29,422.58	
Accounts Receivable ⁸			
FRS	4,725.33		
SNH	<u>58,750.00</u>		
Total Accounts Receivable		<u>63,475.33</u>	
Total Current Assets			<u>92,897.91</u>

TOTAL ASSETS**92,897.91****LIABILITIES & EQUITY****Liabilities**

Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable ⁹	6,745.45		
Other Current Liabilities – VAT Control ¹⁰	<u>9,477.85</u>		
Total Current Liabilities		16,223.30	
Total Liabilities			16,223.30

Equity

Opening Balance Equity	71,121.88		
Net Income as per P&L	<u>5,552.73</u>		
Total Equity			76,674.61

TOTAL LIABILITY & EQUITY**92,897.91**⁸ Sales invoices raised in March 2005, settled in April 2005⁹ Purchase invoices received in March 2005, settled in April 2005¹⁰ VAT due for quarter January – March 2005, settled in April 2005