

I am aware that we have been running at full tilt to sort plans and logistics with no time to formalise our Governance arrangements for the West Coast Tracking work. As outlined by Tim Mcdonnell at the inception, we need a Tripartite Governance Board comprising Fisheries Management Scotland, Marine Scotland Science and Atlantic Salmon Trust. It would be good to meet to discuss governance and review planning, with a focus on clarifying who does what as we progress.

In terms of publicising the work, we should be consistent that it is a collaboration between our three organisations (AST, FMS and MSS) based on funding from Scottish Government (as well as any other support from other groups). We should jointly agree the programme of work and any documented outputs. I think that it is extremely important to emphasise the pilot nature of the work and to manage expectations within a general context of what is required to answer our questions of interest fully.

I hope this is acceptable and that we can organise a meeting reasonably soon. If you indicate your general availabilities then we can home in on a suitable date.

All the best for 2020

[Redacted – Personal Details]

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From: [Redacted – Personal Details]@atlanticsalmontrust.org>
Sent: 23 January 2020 09:21
To: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: West Coast Tracking

Morning [Redacted – Personal Details]

Apologies for not getting back to you sooner but I am currently away at the moment.

Re Mowi would you be available for a phone call today around lunchtime or after 4:00. Please let me know what suits you best.

Mark

Sent from my iPhone

On 21 Jan 2020, at 19:29, [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot> wrote:

Evening Mark, Alan,

We are thinking of making a direct request to MOWI from MSS for a contribution-in-kind for one of their vessels and crews to deploy our kit in April.

I just wanted to make sure that this action would not cut negatively across any negotiations that you have underway.

Thanks

[Redacted – Personal Details]

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From: Mark Bilsby <mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org>
Sent: 14 January 2020 21:18
To: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Evening [Redacted – Personal Details],

Happy to talk this through with you tomorrow. I am travelling in the morning but available on my mobile – 0781 00880409 if you want to speak. I will be unavailable between 10 and 12 though.

Kind regards

Mark

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot [mailto:[Redacted]@gov.scot]
Sent: 14 January 2020 18:32
To: hq@nasco.int; Mark Bilsby <mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Cc: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Hi Emma,

I am happy to speak with Mark to agree text if you have time to wait. I was working quickly to meet your pressing deadline (which I thought was today).

The second project is highly relevant to coastal tracking work. At the NASCO meeting in 2014, considerable concern was expressed by some delegates regarding 1) the likelihood that effects of tagging would substantially exaggerate estimates of smolt mortality, and 2) that range of detection of acoustic receivers can be very low under some sea conditions (and hence curtains of receivers may be very leaky). The second Marine Scotland Science project starts to address the first of these points.

Let me know what works best

[Redacted – Personal Details]

From: NASCO <hq@nasco.int>
Sent: 14 January 2020 18:07
To: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Cc: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; Mcdonnell T (Tim) <Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Hello [Redacted – Personal Details],

Thank you for your response. However, I have to admit to being a little confused. I had thought you were going to speak with Mark and agree text based on what he had already sent me such that I could update that in my paper to the International Atlantic Salmon Board Working Group. I understand that the project is in a pilot phase right now. However, there won't be a Working Group to look at the SALSEA-Track programme again (or whatever it morphs into) for quite some time so I think it would be helpful to include as much of the anticipated / potential project work as possible to inform the Review Group.

Mark – are you happy for me to use the reduced text that [Redacted – Personal Details] suggests below? I would at least like to include an indication of how long it is intended that the project should run for if funding is achieved, if not more! However, I need to send out the paper tomorrow, if at all possible. For your information, I had incorporated your information but reached out to [Redacted – Personal Details] to find out if I could include it as an update to the original SALSEA-Track project 'West-coast Scottish Arrays'.

[Redacted – Personal Details] – is the second project that you mention unrelated to the west coast tracking project? I am happy to include it as a separate project, for information.

[Redacted – Personal Details] has sent me an update on the Sea Monitor project.

Kind regards,
Emma

From: [Redacted]@gov.scot <[Redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 January 2020 17:52
To: NASCO <hq@nasco.int>; mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Cc: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Hi Emma,

As an update to my contributions following the NASCO marine tracking meeting of 2014, I have drafted a summary of recent developments below. I assume that the Sea Monitor project will have been picked up by [Redacted – Personal Details]. There is still considerable uncertainty in what will be possible this year and I think the main point is that we are at the pilot stage and can elaborate further when we see how the work progresses. I know that you have more detail in a briefing from Mark if necessary.

I have copied in my collaborators Mark and Alan in case they want to suggest amendments, recognising that you have a very tight timescale to work to.

Best

[Redacted – Personal Details]

1. Tracking salmon smolts in the West Scotland coast

At present there is little information on the distributions of salmon smolts over time as they leave the Scottish coasts. Such information is important for informing spatial planning decisions, particularly in relation to salmon aquaculture. It is impractical to track salmon smolts from many river systems and hence there is a need to develop a general model of dispersion. To this end, Marine Scotland Science has developed particle tracking models that predict dispersion depending on swimming vectors of smolts, coupled with local water currents. It is now necessary to ground truth such models by experimental determination of swimming vectors and empirical estimates of smolt movements and distributions at sea.

The Atlantic Salmon Trust, Fisheries Management Scotland and Marine Scotland Science are collaborating to oversee a project (largely supported by the Scottish Maritime fund) to start to map locations of acoustically-tagged salmon smolts at sea. Glasgow University are providing field tagging teams in support.

An array of receivers will be established extending to the north and south of the Outer Hebridean Islands and between the islands. A further array may be deployed within the Minch. Smolts will be captured and tagged in a number of rivers in the west and south-west of Scotland. The main objectives at this pilot stage will be to determine whether the arrays pick up tags and are capable of differentiating among several possible swimming vectors. It is anticipated that as a next stage (subject to availability of funding), a grid array of receivers will be deployed within the Minch to refine further the actual swimming vectors of smolts and so develop a dispersal model that can be used for planning.

The project may also provide some information regarding smolts tagged by Glasgow University in the EU Sea Monitor project to the south of an array of receivers between N Ireland and SW Scotland.

2. Impacts of tagging on smolt survival

Marine Scotland Science will commence a project in 2020 (with first tagging of smolts in 2021) to evaluate the impacts of tagging and tag size on subsequent survival of salmon smolts. The project will use smallest acoustic tags and tagging of pre-smolts as a “minimum impact baseline” for comparison with effects of larger tags and of handling and tagging fish as they emigrate from the river. The project is funded and will involve collaboration with Fisheries Management Scotland members on four east coast rivers. The project will inform on-going work funded by the Atlantic Salmon Trust to assess losses of tagged smolts within rivers.

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From: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Sent: 21 February 2020 09:57
To: [Redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

From: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 January 2020 10:21
To: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; Mcdonnell T (Tim) <Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

For information. [Redacted – Personal Details]

From: [Redacted – Personal Details]
Sent: 15 January 2020 10:20
To: 'NASCO' <hq@nasco.int>; mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Hi Emma,

I think Mark's note was constructed some time ago. Subsequently we have had discussions to clarify what we think is and is not achievable in the way of providing robust information. I think we need to be very clear on what can be achieved as a focus. Other anecdotes might also incidentally be achieved, but it is important to be clear that the work planned at this stage will not, for example, determine what proportions of salmon head through the Minch and around the Hebrides. I think that I have captured the output of those discussions in my summary note, but happy to modify subject to discussion with Mark and Alan. Once we have more pilot information it will be possible to develop thinking further and we can easily then update NASCO.

Mark and I are hoping to talk today if possible.

Best
[Redacted – Personal Details]

From: NASCO <hq@nasco.int>
Sent: 15 January 2020 09:10
To: [Redacted] (MARLAB) <[Redacted]@gov.scot>; mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Subject: RE: West Coast Salmon Smolt Tracking Project

Morning [Redacted – Personal Details],

I am not sure what it is that you would like to alter / delete in Mark's text. If you could speak with him today and get back to me that would be incredibly helpful.

Thank you,
Emma

From: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 January 2020 18:32
To: NASCO <hq@nasco.int>; mark@atlanticsalmontrust.org; [Redacted – Personal Details]@fms.scot
Cc: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot
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Cc: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot; Tim.Mcdonnell@gov.scot; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot

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From: [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>

Sent: 10 January 2020 16:01

To: Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
<CabSecECCLR@gov.scot>

Cc: News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>; Communications Rural Economy & Environment
<CommunicationsRuralEconomy&Environment@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal
Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@scotland.gsi.gov.uk>; [Redacted –
Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal
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Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal Details]@gov.scot>; [Redacted – Personal
Details]@gov.scot>

Subject: Line to clear - smolt tracking/round table - Sunday Post

Cab Sec/PO,

The Sunday Post is looking for any update we can give following this week's announcement of a £750,000 SG contribution to track smolt migration on the west coast.

We have discussed with policy officials and SpAds, and suggest reissuing previous lines with the addition in bold below. Grateful for clearance to proceed on this basis.

Thanks,

[Redacted – Personal Details]

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“As the Environment Secretary announced this week, we are providing a £750,000 funding contribution for an innovative project between the Scottish Government, Atlantic Salmon Trust and Fisheries Management Scotland, to work in partnership to track smolt migration on the west coast of Scotland to improve our understanding of this important species.

“The decline in the numbers of wild salmon returning to Scottish rivers is of great concern, and caused by a range of complex factors.

[Redacted – One sentence – Out of Scope]. **We will continue to work alongside key stakeholders to do everything possible to safeguard the future of Scotland's wild salmon.”**

Background

Further details on the recent round table on the future of wild salmon, where the funding was announced, is available [online](#)

[Redacted – Personal Details]

Newsdesk

Scottish Government

Ext [Redacted – Personal Details]

0131 244 0222