

## **SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWER 28 September – 02 October 2015**

Questions were asked *inter alia* on: wild salmon, Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme, Crown Estate management, and beavers.

### **Monday 28 September**

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how an annual sustainable harvest of wild salmon will be calculated. Holding answer issued: 4 September 2015

#### **(S4W-26992)**

**Aileen McLeod:** As part of the new proposals underpinning the proposed kill licence scheme, the killing of salmon would be managed on an annual basis by categorising fishery districts and Special Areas of Conservation in relation to their conservation status. Details on how this would be calculated have been published on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence>.

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government how many licences to kill wild salmon are expected to be issued in 2016. Holding answer issued: 4 September 2015

#### **(S4W-26997)**

**Aileen McLeod:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-26992 on 28 September 2015. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>.

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it has concluded the criteria for compensating netsmen who do not receive a licence to kill wild salmon. Holding answer issued: 4 September 2015

#### **(S4W-26998)**

**Aileen McLeod:** We are developing an appropriate diversification/compensation package and will publish details at the earliest opportunity.

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what estimate it has made of the level of compensation likely to be needed to close mixed fishery netting businesses as part of the wild salmon kill licence strategy. Holding answer issued: 4 September 2015

#### **(S4W-26999)**

**Aileen McLeod:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-26998 on 28 September 2015. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (Scottish National Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it considers that there is a difference between the hereditary rights of active and dormant fishing stations in relation to possible levels of compensation regarding wild salmon fishing. Holding answer issued: 4 September 2015

#### **(S4W-27000)**

**Aileen McLeod:** I refer the member to the answer to question S4W-26998 on 28 September 2015. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

**Tuesday 29 September**

No relevant questions.

**Wednesday 30 September**

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government for what conservation reasons it has introduced a system under which salmon can only be killed by anglers under licence. Holding answer issued: 29 September 2015

**(S4W-27443)**

**Aileen McLeod:** The introduction of a kill licence was a key recommendation of the independent Wild Fisheries Review published in 2014. The review called for this issue to be given immediate consideration given the conservation status of wild salmon. The revised proposals recently published by Scottish ministers details a system which provides a mechanism to control fishing activity. The killing of salmon will be managed on an annual basis by categorising fishery districts and Special Areas of Conservation in relation to their conservation status.

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government whether there is a national shortage of spawning salmon; whether this has resulted in a reduction in juvenile salmon in Scottish rivers, and whether it will publish the statistical evidence in this regard. Holding answer issued: 29 September 2015

**(S4W-27444)**

**Aileen McLeod:** Using best available evidence, there is a shortage of spawning salmon in some parts of Scotland but not others. Marine Scotland Science has published evidence of reduced levels of juvenile production in two tributaries on the Aberdeenshire River Dee (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/Freshwater/Monitoring/Traps>).

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason it considers that its proposed controls on salmon spawning could have a significant effect on numbers, given that it is understood that up to 90% of salmon in Scottish rivers escape to spawn elsewhere. Holding answer issued: 29 September 2015

**(S4W-27445)**

**Aileen McLeod:** It is believed that most wild Scottish salmon return to spawn in the river where they were themselves spawned. Below a critical level of spawning adults, the production of smolts depends not on how many juveniles can be supported by the river habitat, but rather by the number of eggs deposited. In this circumstance, an increase in spawning fish by reducing numbers killed by a fishery can be expected to increase the number of smolts produced and increase population strength.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government, given that the application period closes on 16 October 2015, when full details on eligibility will be available to agricultural units wishing to apply to the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme. Holding answer issued: 28 September 2015

**(S4W-27490)**

**Richard Lochhead:** I announced details of the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme when I delivered details of my decisions on Common Agricultural Policy reform to the Scottish Parliament in June 2014. I subsequently wrote to all Scotland's farmers in July 2014 with basic details of the arrangements and full details of the scheme have been available on the Rural Payments and Services website since 27 October 2014. In addition, my officials are in the process of writing to 8,000 farmers likely to be eligible under the scheme, drawing their attention to this important source of potential support.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government whether crofters with a common grazings share are eligible for the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme. Holding answer issued: 28 September 2015

**(S4W-27491)**

**Richard Lochhead:** The scheme is open to all eligible farmers with sheep, whether crofters or not and whether they have common grazing shares or not. If crofters apply and they have shares in common grazings, we will use this information to assess eligibility. **Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason the proposed retention period under the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme is six months. Holding answer issued: 28 September 2015

**(S4W-27492)**

**Richard Lochhead:** The aim of the scheme is to support active farmers working some of our most challenging land. It must not be a source of support to large inactive landowners, which is why eligibility rests on home-bred ewe hogs. As Mr Scott will know from his background in farming, these are the animals that the eligible businesses will retain to maintain and enhance their flocks so the active businesses will have nothing to fear from the retention period. A retention period of six months is necessary to prevent the artificial creation of eligibility by those who can be described as slipper farmers as opposed to active farmers.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (Scottish Liberal Democrats):** To ask the Scottish Government who the members are of the Stakeholder Advisory Group set up to consider future management options for the Crown Estate. Holding answer issued: 28 September 2015

**(S4W-27514)**

**Richard Lochhead:** The first meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group on the Crown Estate, chaired by myself, was held on Wednesday 16 September 2015.

The group provides a forum for a range of stakeholders to outline their views on the development of a new framework for management of Crown Estate assets in Scotland. The current membership of the group is as follows:

- Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers
- British Marine Federation Scotland
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Community Land Scotland
- COSLA
- Crown Estate
- Commissioners (by personal invitation)
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise

NFU Scotland  
Oil and Gas UK  
Orkney Islands Council  
Royal Town Planning Institute  
Royal Yachting Association Scotland  
Scottish Enterprise  
Scottish Land and Estates  
Scottish Local Government Partnership  
Scottish Ports Committee  
Scottish Renewables  
Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation  
Scottish Tenant Farmers Association  
Shellfish Association of Great Britain  
Shetland Islands Council  
Subsea Group UK  
UK Major Ports Group Limited  
West Highland Anchorages and Moorings Association  
West Highland and Tobermory Harbour Association

**Thursday 01 October**

No relevant questions.

**Friday 02 October**

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government what the timetable is for announcing a decision on the future of beavers in Scotland.

**(S4W-27654)**

**Aileen McLeod:** A decision on the future of beavers in Scotland will be announced in due course. Ministers are carefully considering the Scottish Natural Heritage report Beavers in Scotland and meeting stakeholders to hear their views.

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the decision on the permanent reintroduction of beavers will be (a) a decision in principle to retain or remove, followed by a further period of time to establish the necessary legal and practical detail to deliver this or (b) a fully considered legal and funded proposal that is ready to be implemented right away.

**(S4W-27655)**

**Aileen McLeod:** The Scottish Natural Heritage report Beavers in Scotland sets out four possible scenarios for the future of beavers in Scotland. Any decision is likely to be based on these options. Furthermore, any announcement would need to provide information on how the preferred scenario would be achieved and what management framework would be envisaged.