

Wild trout conservation and fisheries revival in Wester Ross and the Isle of Skye: time for rethink?

One day workshop, Kinlochewe Village Hall, 30th April 2019, 10am – 4pm

(& wild trout field excursion 1st May)



Supported by the Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board, the Wild Trout Trust and Marine Scotland

The Isle of Skye and Wester Ross Fisheries Trust area remains a stronghold for wild Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations. Wild trout are found in hundreds of freshwater lochs and coastal stream systems within the area where they are often a keystone species. There is much diversity within the species and in the habitats in which trout are found.



Loch Maree system ferox trout by Paul Vecsei

<https://www.flickr.com/people/fishasart/>

For example, Loch Maree and the Camasunary river system on the Isle of Skye formerly supported fisheries where sea trout of over 4kg were regularly caught. At the other end of the wild trout spectrum are isolated populations of small brown trout living above waterfalls where trout complete their life cycle and mature without growing larger than 15cm in length.

The purpose of this workshop is to review new information and objectives for both the conservation of wild trout diversity and the revival and management of once prolific trout fisheries.

In the past 10 years, advances have been made in our understanding of the genetic diversity of brown trout, the consequences of stocking programmes, and of the movement and performance of sea trout in coastal waters. What has been learned that can help to guide fisheries management and conservation?

The outline plan is to split the day into two sessions (please see next page for programme):

- **Session 1: Wild trout diversity: populations and adaptation**

This session will focus on the genetic diversity of wild brown trout in the Gairloch – Loch Maree area and beyond. To what extent have wild trout adapted to where they live?

- **Session 2: Sea trout, sea lice and habitat management**

A series of talks focussing on sea trout, sea louse genetics, and management for wild trout. What can be done to conserve and manage wild trout as the environment changes?

This workshop builds on previous studies in Wester Ross some of which can be found via links here:

<https://www.wrft.org.uk/fisheries/browntrout.cfm> ; <https://www.wrft.org.uk/fisheries/seatrout.cfm>

A summary of a previous workshop in 2010 which considered the need to stock sea trout in Wester Ross can be found here: <https://www.wrft.org.uk/news/newsitem.cfm?id=113> .

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Wester Ross Wild Trout Workshop, Kinlochewe Village Hall, 30th April 2019

Supported by Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board and The Wild Trout Trust



Programme (*provisional titles for some talks*)

10:00 Tea and coffee upon arrival at Kinlochewe Village Hall

10:30 Welcome and introduction

10:35 **Dr Steve Kett** (University of Middlesex) *Introduction to the Loch Maree Wild Trout Project*

11:00 **Vu Dang** (University of Middlesex) *A first look at the population structure of Loch Maree wild trout*

11:25 Short break . . .

11:35 **Dr Toby Landeryou** (University of Middlesex) *Immunogenic adaptation of UK brown trout populations to parasite infection*

12:00 **Prof Eric Verspoor** (UHI Rivers and Lochs Institute) *Trout tales from Loch Laidon and other wild waters . . .*

12:30 Lunch

13:35 **Peter Cunningham** (SWRFT) *Wester Ross: a stronghold for the future of wild brown trout? Observations and challenges . . .*

14:00 **Dr David Morris** (Marine Scotland Science) *Tracking sea trout in Loch Torridon: where do they go (and why)?*

14:25 Short break

14:35 **Dr Martijn Timmermans** (Middlesex University) *Sea lice in the molecular biology classroom*

15:00 **Gareth Pedley** (The Wild Trout Trust) *Habitat management for wild trout: examples of the work of The Wild Trout Trust*

15:30 **General discussion:** priorities for the conservation and management of wild trout in Wester Ross area

16:00 Close of meeting

