

## The Scottish Freshwater Group (SFG): Reflecting on SFG 100

We thoroughly enjoyed celebrating the Scottish Freshwater Group's remarkable 50-year legacy, with more than 130 of you, at our centenary gathering in April 2018. It was a fantastic occasion for catching up with so many familiar faces and welcoming a lot of new people into our thriving community – reflecting the socially inclusive values upon which the SFG was founded and endure to this day.

Our 100<sup>th</sup> SFG meeting provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on collective successes – capturing five decades of the SFG's influential contributions to freshwater science, policy and practice. The tremendous breadth and depth of work presented, both verbally and in poster format, by a diversity of people spanning a range of career profiles, speaks volumes for the sustained interest, importance and commitment to understanding, protecting and improving Scotland's freshwater environment.

Across the two days, a core storyline emerged about the incredible distance we've travelled and our innate capacity for embracing change – the SFG's come a long way and we continue to develop a shared understanding of how rapidly evolving technology is transforming monitoring approaches, to inform decision-making for Scotland's precious freshwater resources, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Overall, it was an immensely informative and inspiring meeting, with something for everyone's taste buds and filled with positive messages about the SFG's future. The ceilidh was great fun too, as were the interesting conversations which continued into the wee hours. We hope that the special memories made – will live on for another 50 years!

Delivering a SFG event on this scale entailed considerable behind the scenes planning and dedication to the cause – it's essential to acknowledge all those who were integral to making it happen in the first place, from its conception over 18 months ago, through to shaping the programme, running a smooth operation and generating such lively enthusiasm! So, we'd like to express an enormous appreciation to crediting everyone involved in its successful creation from our SFG members – your contributions and participation at meetings is fundamental to the SFG's longevity and vitality; our session chairs – for their knowledge, dynamism and skilful timekeeping across our four themes; the University of Stirling – our life partner for providing a wonderful venue at no cost to our SFG members; the Scottish Government – for supporting our catering, refreshments and publication output in Aquatic Conservation; and of course, our SFG 100<sup>th</sup> Organising Committee (Colin Adams, Nigel Willby, Laurence Carvalho, Chris Spray, Colin Bean, Peter Maitland, Jennifer Dodd, Alan Law, Martin Hughes, Tiê Caribé, Colin Bull and Paulette Burns) – significant catalysts in realising our vision,

who were willing to input thoughts, multitask, roll up their sleeves wherever needed and give their valuable time and energy to serving a great purpose.

All in all, our 100<sup>th</sup> meeting required a real SFG collaborative effort – mirroring the meaningful connections, lifelong friendships and extensive support network found at the heart of the Scottish Freshwater Group.

### **SFG Logo, Autumn 2018 Mtg. & Growing Membership**

We're thankful to everyone who provided feedback on a favourite SFG logo 'concept' – based on our SFG members' ideas, which multi-talented Steve Thackeray (CEH) has helped bring to life to celebrate our 50 year anniversary and the SFG's future. Making this decision enables us to move closer towards developing a finalised SFG logo, meshed with the skills of CEH's graphics team – we'll do our best to preserve popular elements for the SFG logo, although we'll need to be flexible and balance our ideals with creativity and expert guidance emerging during the design process.

We plan to unveil this creation at the next SFG meeting in autumn (Thurs 25 October) 2018 – where we'll return to our traditional open theme format, appealing to the SFG's broader interest. We're seeking offers of talks and posters for this forthcoming meeting and would love to hear from you!

Ronald Campbell (Tweed Foundation) received the accolade of having given the most SFG talks (from our past-present-future statistical analysis of one hundred SFG meetings) and has kindly offered to deliver his 12<sup>th</sup> SFG presentation, in the form of the annual Buckland Lecture – so, we've allocated a 1 hour slot for this exciting and not-to-be-missed story at the autumnal SFG meeting!

We're delighted so many SFG members have managed to attend recent SFG meetings and hope to see a strong turnout continuing at future gatherings – our contributors put a lot of effort into preparing and communicating their work for the opportunity to engage with a wide-ranging audience.

In other news, our SFG network has grown by 150 new members in the past 18 months – wow! Please keep up the great promotional work by encouraging other interested people to connect with us – it's free, straightforward to join (simply contact the SFG team) and will help to nourish the SFG community for many years to come.

### **SFG Moving Forward**

The SFG brings people together with a shared interest in freshwaters and catalyses communication amongst us. Our forum's also about growing people, enabling potential and building confidence

through exposure to experience, in an informal and friendly setting, through time. The SFG's had a positive influence on the lives of many of our members and with this, comes an intrinsic responsibility for helping grow the future environmental leaders – inspiring and developing those people who'll be doing jobs like ours and caring for the freshwater environment, decades from today.

To sustain the longevity and vitality of the SFG, we aspire to enrich the cultural benefits and invaluable connections which we all receive from being part of it. Achieving this vision will involve harnessing the SFG's collaborative power and transforming our leadership capabilities to help shape outcomes for Scotland's freshwater environment – we've made a promising head start by collating the workshop outcomes from our 99<sup>th</sup> SFG meeting to envision a sustainable future. We'll need help translating these ideas into realistic priorities for meaningful action and see these, potentially, being taken forward in the form of NERC innovation proposals, virtual SFG project team(s) and partnership working opportunities. A call for SFG support will follow separately – with expressions of interest warmly invited (email [Laurence Carvalho](mailto:Laurence.Carvalho@scotland.gov.uk)).

We'll also occasionally take steps to revitalise the SFG by exploring different meeting formats, key themes and, following a successful event at SCENE (Spring 2016), another SFG Bio-blitz type of adventure is certainly on the cards in the next few years – early bird suggestions welcome!

In the meantime, we're offering a plethora of opportunities for all SFG members. So, if you fancy getting more involved with the hands on delivery of SFG meetings (e.g. chairing, presenting, organising) – please do get in touch with us.

We're also keen to hear your thoughts on how to move the SFG forward – building the SFG's future legacy begins now!

Best wishes,

Pauline & the SFG team