

Forever free and flowing

Helsinki 16.11.2018

The Panel – short summary in English

Link: <https://youtu.be/Ee-ZhiOHNdA>

Professor emeritus (fisheries), Mr. Hannu Lehtonen (Helsinki University)

Executive director Mr. Markku Marttinen (Suomen Vapaa-ajankalastajien Keskusjärjestö, Finnish anglers alliance)

Fisheries officer Mr. Olli Sivonen (WWF Finland)

Moderator: senior advisor Mr. Tapani Veistola (Finnish Association for Nature Conservation)

Why are you here?

Lehtonen was shocked when he heard some decades ago from a local fisherman in Lapland how Salmon has decreased because of sea fisheries.

Marttinen reminded how a national parliamentary committee was joking in the memorandum about other values than energy values hundred years ago (1913) and how our rivers were built after the 2nd World War.

Sivonen has been angler and seen the problems of freshwaters and fish populations himself.

What was the nicest moment in the movies?

Lehtonen: The explosion of dam!

Marttinen: A small child (Parker).

Sivonen: All were good!

What is the situation for migratory fish in Finland?

Marttinen: We have lost most salmon rivers, Tornionjoki still going strong. We have had c. 60 sea trout rivers – now we have 12 left. We have now a national Fishway Strategy, Strategy for Salmon and Sea-trout, a new Fisheries Act and Protection laws for Rapids. Our Water Act is not modern and should be updated, and NGOs have done a proposal to make fishways also to old small dams. In addition, there is a new report about roads and how we can build them in a good way so that fish can swim under the road.

Sivonen: We have 12 endangered fish species and no compensation payment for illegal catch of them (e.g. mammals and birds have it). The new national Fisheries Act had many improvements but overfishing culture is still going. In Sweden they have had more sustainable fishing culture, e.g. the first protection area in Sweden was established because of overfishing by two *Finnish* fishermen who moved there!

Lehtonen: Others have listed all most important ones - the state is taking fish protection now more seriously.

What should be done?

Sivonen: The Water Act revision to update the licences of hydropower dams. We can also ask from consumers: Where you are buying your electricity?

Lehtonen agrees that update of Water Act permits for hydropower plants is the most important thing. Now many permits have an obligation to reintroduce fish, but it is not working with Salmon and it is also waste of money – it is better to make fishways and restore breeding areas.

Marttinen: Next spring we have national parliamentary elections, so remember to vote wisely! We have c. 220 hydropower plants – and c. 150 of them are small (5 MW or less, giving 5 % of water energy) - and c. 50 of them don't have obligations for fishways etc. at all. Rearing fish is not working, restoration is better. The value of recreational fishing in Tornionjoki in 2017 was 11 million euros. Anglers are spending in their hobby in Finland 250 million euros annually.

What common people can do?

Lehtonen: Buy ecologically good electricity!

Sivonen: Raise awareness, tell to other people, act locally in restoring etc.

Marttinen: Take part in local restoration works, they need volunteers! It works, e.g. Longinoja in Helsinki.

What Finland should do during the EU presidency 2019?

Sivonen: Salmon fishing pressure (TACs and quotas) to the level of scientific advice!

Mattinen: Agree, Salmon fishing quotas should become sustainable in the Baltic Sea.

Lehtonen: Salmon overfishing should be controlled, especially in Poland.

Mr Antton Keto (Ministry of the Environment):

The Water Framework Directive revision is going over the Finnish presidency, because the Commission and Member States have delays.

- Finland is going to make impact to the new Commission work plan.

- In addition, border river agreements are important, e.g. Tornionjoki Finland - Sweden.

Some questions

Seppo Leinonen reminded that the economic value of professional sea fisheries is much smaller than angling in the rivers.

- In addition, Finland has derogations in the Habitats Directive: could these derogations be removed?

-> Marttinen: Yes, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry gained derogations in 1995 – and Finland can't get EU funding for e.g. Salmon because of derogations.

-> Veistola: Yes, in some EU projects we have had to use habitats as an argument to get funding, because fish species have derogations.

Another comment: peatland and forest dredgings are bad for the quality of waters

- Marttinen: Yes, and Pro Agria has a seminar how to do new small hydropower next week!

Vantaanjoki activist: Is there any hope to remove Vantaankoski dam in Helsinki?

- Sivonen: Not now but the dam may become too old and then the river takes it...

- Lehtonen: Museum authorities have defended the dam.

- Veistola: There could be win-win solution to remove one part of this dam and keep another for historical purposes.

Helvi Heinonen-Tanski: NGO has problem in restoring projects in rivers, because the authorities pay too slowly for NGOs...

- Antton Keto: The Ministry of the Environment know this - but the payments are paid by another body under another ministry.

Good examples from Finland to other countries?

- **and Tobias Schäfer asked about the Finnish presidency**

Sivonen: Rapid protection laws.

Marttinen and Sivonen: Fishway strategy 2012. However, it is not implemented properly because of lack of money.

J. Solantie: There are lots of anglers in Finland and it is a good possibility to promote to other countries how easy and important fishing is in Finland.

Chair: Thank you!