

Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture, 15 January 2013

Prince Charles Challenged to Stand Up for King of Fish

Wester Ross & Lochaber, Scotland - HRH The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Westminster and Duke of Northumberland were today (15 January) [challenged](#) to stand up for wild fish in their roles as patron and presidents of the Salmon & Trout Association and Atlantic Salmon Trust. Following an exposé in The Sunday Times (“[Anti-aquaculture body ‘aiding fish farm growth’](#)”), a letter urging withdrawal from the ‘Managing Interactions Aquaculture Project’ (MIAP) has been sent from river owners and wild salmon advocates. The [letter](#) asks groups including the Rivers & Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS), Fish Legal and the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards to “stop supporting the promotion of salmon farming on West coast Scottish sea lochs and start protecting wild salmon and sea trout”.

“The question is simple: do you support the protection of healthy wild salmon and sea trout populations or do you support yet more disease-ridden and sea lice-infested salmon farms in Scottish sea lochs?” asks the [letter](#) signed by Jenny Scobie of the Rhidorroch Estate, James Semple and Jon Gibb from Lochaber District Salmon Fishery Board and Don Staniford of the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture. “The answer is simple too. All the scientific evidence including the recent Royal Society paper on sea lice infestation from salmon farms points to an incompatibility between healthy wild fish stocks and lice-infested salmon farms. You therefore have to make a choice – you cannot have both healthy wild fish and farmed salmon in nearby inshore pens. As supporters of wild fish, we think the wild fish lobby must do just that: lobby on behalf of wild fish not assist the PR machine of the Norwegian-owned Scottish salmon farming industry. Hence we are calling on you to stand up for healthy wild salmon and sea trout and withdraw your support for MIAP. Please follow the lead of Lochaber Fisheries Trust who withdrew their support for MIAP just last week.”

Read the letter in full [online here](#)

The Rivers & Trusts of Scotland together with the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards, Fish Legal, the Angling Trust, the Salmon & Trout Association (whose patron is HRH The Prince of Wales and whose president is the Duke of Northumberland) and the Atlantic Salmon Trust (whose patron is HRH The Prince of Wales and whose president is the Duke of Westminster) have all publicly pledged endorsement of salmon farming on the West coast of Scotland via their support for the Scottish government-funded MIAP (read a ‘[Ministerial Briefing](#)’ and ‘[Policy Paper: Aquaculture](#)’).

“The public have a right to expect that the wild fish lobby fights to protect wild salmon and sea trout and is not lobbying on behalf of the lice-infested salmon farming industry,” said [Jenny Scobie](#) of the Rhidorroch Estate. “To dare to dismiss some salmon rivers on the West coast of Scotland as expendable is a war cry that cannot go unanswered. Thankfully, there is a legion of wild salmon guardians rising up against the Scottish Government’s lethal policy of expansion. Opposition to salmon farms not collaboration with salmon farmers is the only way to save wild fish on the West coast of Scotland.”

“The wild fish lobby have gone MIA in their misguided support for the Managing Interactions Aquaculture Project,” said Don Staniford of the [Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture](#). “Supporters of so-called ‘wild fish’ lobby groups will be shocked to discover that these salmon sell-outs have deserted the protection of wild fish and are now

promoting salmon farming expansion. The Prince of Wales should be ashamed of His Royal Highness for selling the King of Fish down the river to fuel the Chinese appetite for farmed salmon and fill the coffers of Norwegian companies. The shameful stance of HRH The Prince of Wales as an aquaculture apologist is effectively signing a royal death warrant for wild salmon and sea trout on the West coast of Scotland.”

“The Lochaber Fisheries Trust (LFT), which covers one of the most dense fish farming regions in Scotland, said it had refused to co-operate with RAFTS amid fears its research is flawed,” reported [The Sunday Times](#) (13 January 2013). “Diane Baum, the LFT’s senior biologist, said the trust initially backed the idea of locational guidance to ‘help steer fish farms away from the most sensitive areas’ but became concerned that the research is not sufficiently robust, in particular because the migration routes of young salmon and the dispersal of sea-lice from farms will not be considered.”

“Wild fish interests are coming increasing pressure from the Scottish Government to assess the risk of fish farms without proper data,” said Diane Baum, [Lochaber Fisheries Trust’s](#) senior biologist, in an interview with [The Sunday Times](#) (13 January 2013). “In our view, bad data are worse than no data. We have made a decision not to be part of it.”

Pressure is mounting on wild fish groups to publicly renounce their support for MIAP. Following the withdrawal of the Lochaber Fisheries Trust last week, a [letter](#) was sent yesterday from a board member of the Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board (WRASFB) proposing that the WRASFB withdraw from MIAP. According to the Chairman of the WRASFB (14 January 2013): “RAFTS were informed yesterday of our decision to have the WRASFB name removed from the list of MIAPs supporters pending our formal conclusion.”

The withdrawal of WRASFB now leaves only 8 groups as ‘projects partners’ supporting MIAP although the [RAFTS web-site](#) still lists 10 groups including the Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust, West Sutherland Fisheries Trust and Wester Ross Fisheries Trust (groups funded by salmon farming companies such as Marine Harvest, the Scottish Salmon Company and Loch Duart – and with representatives of salmon farming companies on the board). The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator is now investigating complaints against [Wester Ross Fisheries Trust](#) and the [Rivers & Fisheries Trusts Scotland](#) in relation to conflicts of interest with salmon farming companies (read more via The Sunday Herald’s: “[Wild fish groups under investigation by charity watchdog](#)”).

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