

[Scottish Salmon Watch](#), 3 October 2018

**Justice for Fish**  
**- Welfare of Scottish Salmon in Legal Spotlight**



A [Crowd Justice campaign](#) to fund legal action to stop cruelty and suffering on Scottish salmon farms has been launched. Scottish Salmon Watch is proposing a legal challenge because they believe that salmon farms in Scotland run the risk of breaching the [Animal Health & Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) - specifically in relation to "[Unnecessary Suffering](#)", "[Cruel Operations](#)" and "[Ensuring Welfare of Animals](#)".

**crowdjustice**

**Stop suffering & cruelty on Scottish salmon farms**

by Don Staniford



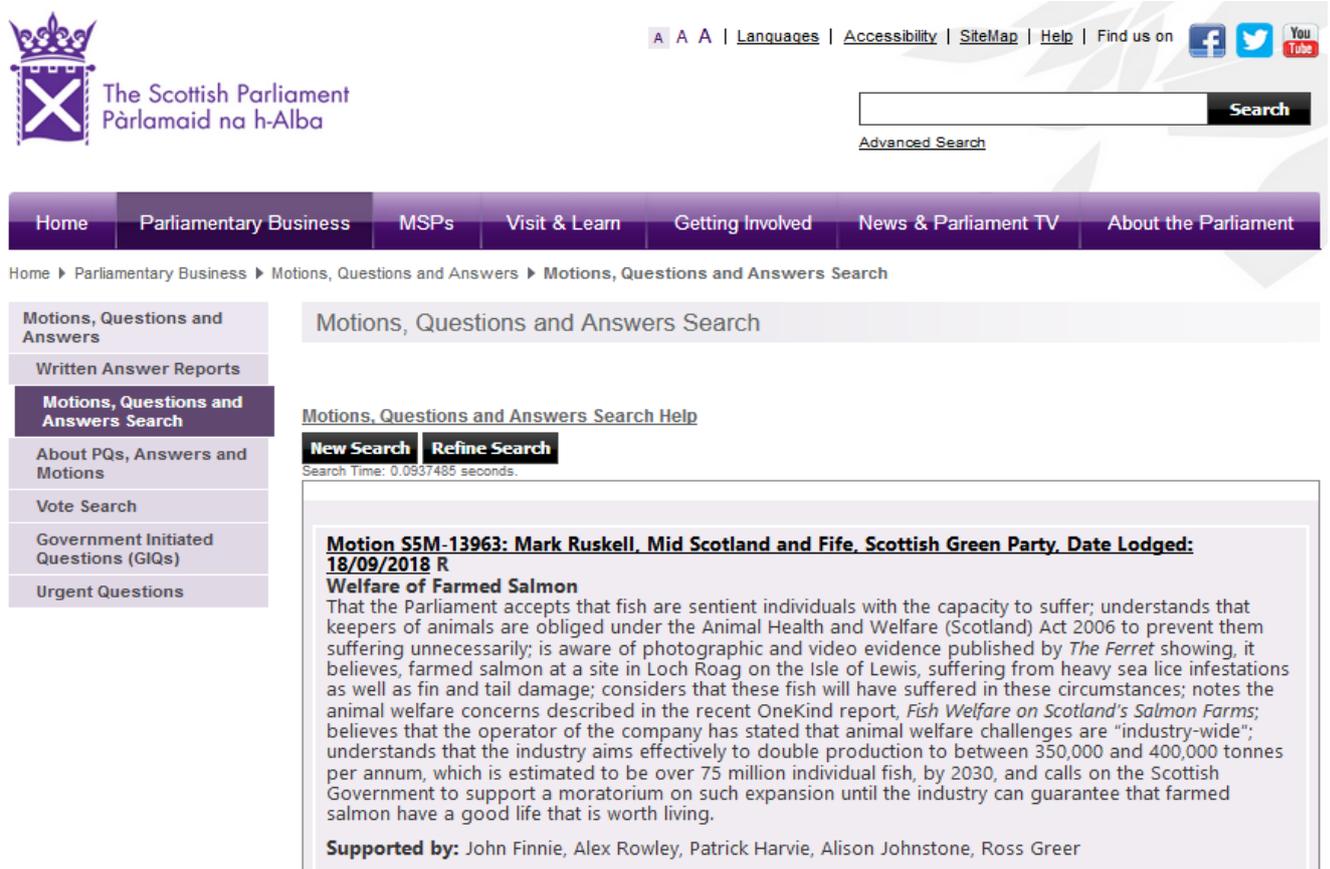
 Animal welfare  Lawyers: Balfour + Manson LLP  United Kingdom

"Cramming the 'King of Fish' in cramped and overcrowded cages is cruel and a welfare nightmare," said [Don Staniford, Director of Scottish Salmon Watch](#). "Scientific research has shown that salmon are sentient beings who feel pain and distress. Secret filming inside salmon farms reveals shocking suffering on salmon farms. Legal action is urgently needed to raise welfare standards on Scottish salmon's torture chambers. Fish have feelings too but have no voice so we need to speak out on their behalf and stand up against cruelty and suffering on Scottish salmon farms."

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## Media Backgrounder:

A [Scottish Parliamentary motion on the 'Welfare of Farmed Fish'](#) was lodged last month by Mark Ruskell MSP.



The screenshot shows the Scottish Parliament website interface. At the top left is the logo of The Scottish Parliament (Pàrlamaid na h-Alba). To the right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, along with a search bar and a 'Search' button. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Parliamentary Business > Motions, Questions and Answers > Motions, Questions and Answers Search. The main content area displays the search results for the motion S5M-13963. The motion title is 'Welfare of Farmed Salmon' and it was lodged on 18/09/2018. The text of the motion describes concerns about sea lice infestations and fin damage on farmed salmon in Loch Roag, and calls for a moratorium on expansion until the industry can guarantee the welfare of the fish. The motion is supported by John Finnie, Alex Rowley, Patrick Harvie, Alison Johnstone, and Ross Greer.

**Motion S5M-13963: Mark Ruskell, Mid Scotland and Fife, Scottish Green Party, Date Lodged: 18/09/2018 R**  
**Welfare of Farmed Salmon**  
That the Parliament accepts that fish are sentient individuals with the capacity to suffer; understands that keepers of animals are obliged under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 to prevent them suffering unnecessarily; is aware of photographic and video evidence published by *The Ferret* showing, it believes, farmed salmon at a site in Loch Roag on the Isle of Lewis, suffering from heavy sea lice infestations as well as fin and tail damage; considers that these fish will have suffered in these circumstances; notes the animal welfare concerns described in the recent OneKind report, *Fish Welfare on Scotland's Salmon Farms*; believes that the operator of the company has stated that animal welfare challenges are "industry-wide"; understands that the industry aims effectively to double production to between 350,000 and 400,000 tonnes per annum, which is estimated to be over 75 million individual fish, by 2030, and calls on the Scottish Government to support a moratorium on such expansion until the industry can guarantee that farmed salmon have a good life that is worth living.  
**Supported by:** John Finnie, Alex Rowley, Patrick Harvie, Alison Johnstone, Ross Greer

The Parliamentary motion follows the broadcast of [damning video footage shot by photographer Corin Smith](#) of lice-infested Scottish salmon at a farm operated by The Scottish Salmon Company in [Loch Roag](#) by the [BBC's 'The One Show'](#).



In August 2018, a report - "[Fish Welfare On Scotland's Salmon Farms](#)" - published by OneKind [highlighted](#) "serious welfare issues on Scotland's salmon farms" and [exposed](#) "a number of welfare breaches including mass mortality, sea lice infestations, disease and escapes".



Earlier this week (1 October), The Ferret [revealed](#) that a salmon farm [caught on film with lice-infested salmon](#) has been reprimanded by the Scottish Government.

In June, Scottish Salmon Watch and The Ferret [published gruesome photos](#) of diseased and deformed Scottish salmon [disclosed via Freedom of Information](#) by the Scottish Government (despite [threats of legal action by lawyers acting for The Scottish Salmon Company and Scottish Sea Farms](#)).



Over 30,000 people have [signed a petition by SumOfUS](#) calling for the Scottish Government to improve the welfare of Scottish salmon by enforcing the Animal Health & Welfare (2006) Act with respect to farmed salmon.



Secret filming [carried out by Scottish Salmon Watch](#) at salmon farms in Loch Fyne and on the Isle of Mull in July and August 2018 has [revealed deformities and lice-infestations](#).



Dr Krzysztof Wojtas, Head of Fish Policy at Compassion in World Farming, [said last month](#):

"Fish are incredibly misunderstood. They are able to feel pain, pleasure and other emotions. Despite this, fish receive very little legal protection and are often farmed in inhumane conditions. We have to put a stop to this."



"The footage quashes industry marketing claims that Scottish salmon farming is 'high-welfare' or 'sustainable' and shows the gruesome reality of the way animals are treated by those who see them as 'products' and nothing else," [reported PETA last month](#). "Salmon and other fish are smart and [most certainly feel pain](#). Scientists who study pain are in agreement that fish's pain-response systems are basically identical to those of mammals and birds. Imagine the agony that these salmon must have endured, swimming in their own faeces, denied anything and everything that's natural and important to them."



Torment: A fish riddled with sea lice filmed by Corin Smith

The Sunday Post [reported](#) (30 September 2018):

## **Underwater film reveals salmon with twisted spines as fears mount over cages**



Salmon with spinal deformities were filmed in Loch Fyne, Argyll.

Fish with “broken back syndrome” were filmed by campaigners at a Scottish Salmon Company farm in Loch Fyne, Argyll.

Expert Andrew Silverston said the condition means afflicted salmon struggle to swim and feed, and would not survive in the wild.

Mr Silverstone co-authored a study which found the deformities were “often observed in intensive farming”.

He said: “It is plausible that in farmed fish we are seeing a higher incidence of these deformities, due to additional stressors placed on the fish.

“The individuals with the spinal deformities are poorer swimmers. While the spinal condition is one that is generally not considered to be a painful one in mammals, the afflicted fish would face a great challenge to survive.”

Campaigner Don Staniford, of Scottish Salmon Watch, shot the footage as part of an investigation into the industry.

The clip showed one lethargic-looking salmon with a twisted body close to the surface. Another had a deformed spine and appeared to have a diseased tail. Others had distinctive bulges in their sides.

Mr Staniford said: “These salmon suffer a cruel, horrible life.”

A salmon with a deformed spine was also photographed by the Fish Health Inspectorate at another of the Scottish Salmon Company’s farms last October.

Inspectors had visited the Vuiabeag site at Loch Roag on the Isle of Lewis and euthanased five fish for testing after the company reported raised mortality levels.

Read in full via [Sunday Post: "Underwater film reveals salmon with twisted spines as fears mount over cages"](#)

In July, Scottish Salmon Watch [filed a welfare complaint with Police Scotland and the Animal & Plant Health Agency](#). In August, following another complaint relating to the operations of The Scottish Salmon Company in Loch Fyne and Scottish Sea Farms in Loch Spelve on the Isle of Mull the Animal & Plant Health Agency replied (16 August):

It is APHA policy not to publically disclose details of individual investigations as they progress or to confirm/deny that any particular investigation is ongoing. However I can confirm that the relevant parts of APHA and Marine Scotland are now aware of the new specific allegations about the sites you have identified. Thank you for providing this evidence. We take all reports received seriously and consider these to be an important part of our efforts to monitor and improve the welfare of farmed animals including farmed fish.

Last month, Scottish Salmon Watch quite literally [lifted the lid](#) on the can of worms, beetles and maggots of diseased farmed salmon.



Lifting the Lid on Diseased & Deformed Scottish Salmon



WARNING: Dirty Rotten Scottish Salmon:  
"Not for Animal Consumption"

Watch more videos [online here](#) and read more [online here](#)