

## Scottish Salmon Watch, 18 May 2018

### Reported Versus Reality - 'Inaccuracies' Rebutted by Scottish Salmon Watch

[Scottish Salmon Watch](#) has published a swift rebuttal to the 'inaccuracies' presented via "[Reported Versus Reality: A Pocket Guide to Scottish Salmon Farming](#)".

"The reality is that Scottish salmon farming is dead in the water," said Don Staniford, Director of [Scottish Salmon Watch](#). "The ugly truth is that mass mortalities, infectious diseases and lice infestation are plaguing Scottish salmon farming. Scientific research has shown that the toxic chemicals used to kill lice are killing lobsters and leaving a lethal legacy at lochs around Scotland. The fact is that Scottish salmon farming shoots dozens of seals each year - over 800 since 2011 - and scares away cetaceans with the use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices (used by over 150 salmon farms). Scottish salmon is farmed and dangerous."

The [pocket guide](#) which addresses "some of the key misconceptions" was published yesterday (17 May 2018) by the [seven Scottish salmon farming companies which make up 99% of Scotland's salmon farming production](#) (namely Grieg Seafood, Marine Harvest, the Scottish Salmon Company, Scottish Sea Farms, Wester Ross Fisheries and Loch Duart).

Fish Update [reported](#) (17 May 2018): "Scotland's salmon farmers have produced a booklet of facts about their industry, aimed at addressing misperceptions and correcting often inaccurate coverage in the press. The publication, 'Reported Versus Reality: A Pocket Guide to Scottish Salmon Farming', has been sent to MSPs, Scottish MPs and local councillors, as well as to other stakeholders, including regulators, environmental groups, and any public bodies connected to the industry."

The Fish Site [reported](#) (17 May 2018): "As the introduction to the booklet states: "Much has been said about Scottish salmon farming in recent months; much of it misleading or inaccurate, particularly with regards to fish welfare and the impact of our farming activity on the environment."

"[Reported Versus Reality: A Pocket Guide to Scottish Salmon Farming](#)" addresses ten key issues - here's a point by point riposte by Scottish Salmon Watch.



**Reported:**  
25% of all  
farmed salmon  
are dying.

**Reality:**

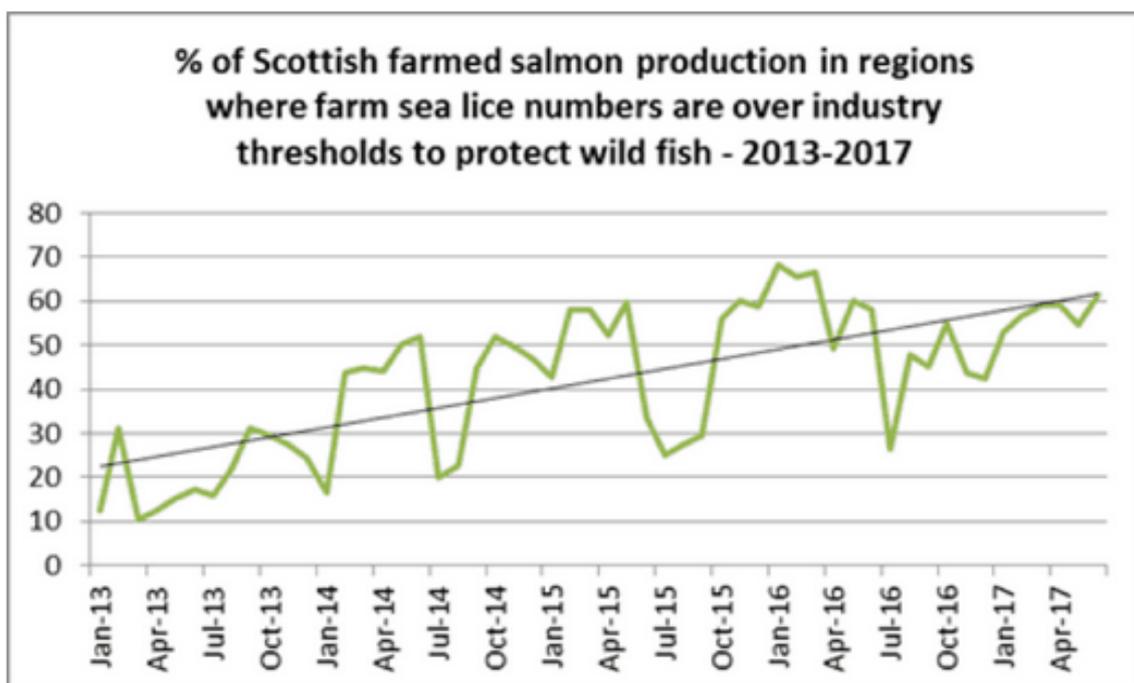
In fact, the latest figure for Scottish farmed salmon mortality is 26.7% ([as disclosed by Fergus Ewing, the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy & Connectivity in a Scottish](#)

[Parliamentary reply in January 2018](#)). Mortalities during 2017 are estimated at 15-20 million - over 23,000 tonnes of dead salmon. Read more via [Hard Evidence: Dossier of Data on Lice Diseases & Mortalities at Scottish Salmon Farms](#).

**Reported:**  
Sea lice are  
out of control.

## Reality:

In fact, sea lice infestation rates have increased year on year since 2013. Scottish salmon's "liciest" farms - 61 in total - include sites operated by the Scottish Salmon Company, Loch Duart, Marine Harvest, Cooke Aquaculture and Scottish Sea Farms (all members of the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation) as well as Grieg Seafood ([kicked out of the SSPO in 2014 for breach of biosecurity](#)). 2018 data [reveals](#) that 31% of salmon farms were above the Code of Good Practice threshold – in some cases seven times over.



Read more via [Scottish salmon farming's 'liciest' farms named and shamed](#); [Scotland's worst sea lice offenders: Full Farm List](#); [Scottish salmon sold by a range of supermarkets in the UK has sea lice up to 20 times acceptable limit](#) and [Hard Evidence: Dossier of Data on Lice Diseases & Mortalities at Scottish Salmon Farms](#).

### **Reported:**

Salmon pens are so tightly packed that it's akin to battery farming.

### **Reality:**

John Robins of the Animal Concern told [The National](#) in February 2018: "Scottish salmon is a welfare nightmare. The general public would be horrified if over a quarter of our cows, pigs, chickens or sheep were dying." Deaths of farmed salmon due to overheating via the 'Thermolicer' is "simply inhumane" according to [Compassion In World Farming](#). Read more on the welfare nightmare on Scottish salmon farms via a [letter to the Cross-Party Group on Animal Welfare](#).

### **Reported:**

Salmon farming pollutes Scottish waters with chemicals.

### **Reality:**

In fact, the use of toxic chemicals to kill sea lice has increased 1000% over the last decade. Scientific research has shown that Emamectin benzoate - the industry's #1 chemical - is lethal to lobsters. Read more via: [The Sunday Times: "Salmon industry toxins soar by 1000 per cent"](#); [Scottish Salmon's Lethal Legacy - Ten-fold Increase in Toxic Chemical Use in Ten Years](#); [Scientific Backgrounder: Ecotoxicity & Chemical Resistance](#); [Damning Report on Toxic Salmon Farms Buried - SEPA finally acts on lobster-killing chemical](#); [Towards Understanding of the Environmental Impact of a Sea Lice Medicine - the PAMP Suite](#) and [Slicegate: Anatomy & Chronology of an Environmental Lobotomy](#).



**Reported:**

Salmon pens  
dump harmful  
waste into the  
environment.

**Reality:**

In March 2018, the Scottish Parliament heard evidence that one salmon farm produces the same amount of waste as all of Scotland's west coast towns put together (sourced [from a report from the Scottish Association of Marine Science](#)). In May 2018, campaigners called for untreated wastes from salmon farming operations to be tested for infectious diseases, viruses and pathogens. Read more via [One fish farm produces waste equivalent to 'all of Scotland's west coast towns'](#); [Herald: "Salmon farms are turning Scotland's seas into an open sewer, claim campaigners"](#); [Scotland's Secret: Aquaculture, Nutrient Pollution, Eutrophication and Toxic Blooms](#); [Impact of fish farms on maerl beds in strongly tidal areas](#) and [Letter to Scottish Government re. Infectious Diseases in Salmon Farming Effluents](#).



**Reported:**

Wild fish are  
declining because  
of salmon farming.

**Reality:**

Scientific research published in January 2018 by the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA) - "[Impacts of salmon lice emanating from salmon farms on wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout](#)" - detailed "considerable evidence" of a link between salmon farms and the spread of lice to wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout. Read more via [The Weight of Scientific Evidence: Sea Lice & Salmon Farms](#); [Fish farm lice are killing wild salmon](#); [Report backs negative sea louse claims](#); [New scientific study underlines damage to wild salmon and sea trout populations from salmon farm parasites – in Scotland, Norway and Ireland](#); and ["Up to third of wild salmon 'eaten alive by fish farm lice'"](#).

**Reported:**  
Salmon farmers  
needlessly kill seals.

## Reality:

In fact, salmon farms in Scotland have reported the killing of over 800 seals since 2011 (despite 70% of salmon farming production being certified via the RSPCA). The industry's definition of 'last resort' killing is blown out of the water by the fact that the majority of salmon farms do not use anti-predator nets or seal blinds.

| Seal Killing Salmon Farms (2011-2017) |           |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Operator                              | 2017      | 2016      | 2015      | 2014      | 2013       | 2012       | 2011       | Total      |
| Scottish Sea Farms                    | 12        | 14        | 15        | 33        | 33         | 45         | 37         | 189        |
| The Scottish Salmon Company           | 7         | 2         | 11        | 14        | 14         | 38         | 54         | 140        |
| Hjaltsland Seafarms (Grieg Seafood)   | 1         |           |           | 7         | 32         | 50         | 50         | 140        |
| Marine Harvest                        | 13        | 26        | 20        | 7         | 5          | 16         | 34         | 121        |
| Loch Duart                            | 15        | 12        | 9         | 13        | 11         | 20         | 10         | 90         |
| Northern Isles Salmon                 |           |           |           |           |            | 16         | 21         | 37         |
| Balta Island Seafare                  |           | 1         | 7         | 6         | 4          | 2          | 6          | 26         |
| Dawnfresh                             |           |           | 3         | 4         | 4          | 7          | 6          | 24         |
| Meridian                              |           |           |           | 1         | 8          | 12         |            | 21         |
| Lakeland                              |           |           |           |           |            |            | 18         | 18         |
| Bound Skerries Salmon                 |           |           |           | 3         | 4          | 5          | 4          | 16         |
| Wester Ross Fisheries                 |           | 2         | 2         | 4         | 3          | 1          | 1          | 13         |
| Cooke Aquaculture                     | 1         | 8         | 3         |           |            |            |            | 12         |
| Kames Fish Farming                    |           |           | 2         |           | 1          |            |            | 3          |
| Thompson Brothers                     |           |           | 1         |           |            |            |            | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>49</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>73</b> | <b>92</b> | <b>119</b> | <b>212</b> | <b>241</b> | <b>851</b> |

Read more via Sunday Herald: [Revealed: Scottish Government bid to exempt salmon farming from US seal-killing ban](#); [Carry on killing says RSPCA](#); [RSPCA in firing line over Marine Harvest's seal-killing spree in Scotland - 118 seals killed by Marine Harvest's RSPCA Assured farms since 2011](#); [The Killing Farms](#); [RSPCA Assured Seals Killers!](#) and [Scottish Salmon Blinded by Seal-Killing: 80% of farms do not use anti-predator nets; 67% do not use seal blinds.](#)



**Reported:**

Salmon farming  
regulation is not  
fit for purpose.

**Reality:**

The reality is that salmon farming is slipping through the regulatory net. In fact, there has not been a single successful prosecution of a salmon farm since November 2008 (between 1998 and 2008 there were at least 23 prosecutions with fines totalling at least £106,500). 91% of site inspections by SEPA to salmon farms are announced (i.e. only 9% are unannounced). Almost a fifth (18%) of Scottish fish farms were classified by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency as failing and responsible for "at least one significant breach" in 2015 with 51 fish farms assessed as "Very Poor", "Poor" or "At Risk" in 2016. Data from SEPA in ranked fish farms as 2nd worst out of "Scotland's polluting industries" in 2015. Read more via [SEPA's Shame on Salmon Farming; Failing Fish Farms - 18% rated "poor" by SEPA in 2015](#); [Exposed: the 383 plants that pollute Scotland](#) and [Mapped: the hundreds of firms condemned for 'poor' pollution performance](#).



**Reported:**

Land-based,  
container-grown  
salmon is a more  
responsible option.

**Reality:**

Whilst it is true that welfare problems would be increased by closed containment the fact is that environmental impacts such as benthic contamination, escapes, the spread of lice, toxic chemical pollution, seal killing and noise pollution from Acoustic Deterrent Devices would be mitigated. Salmon farming, even closed containment, is inherently unsustainable due to the reliance upon wild fish as the source of feed. Read more via [Farming Salmon is Stealing Food from Poor People & Our Oceans](#); [Letter to Kofi Annan](#); [Greed of Feed: what's feeding our cheap farmed salmon?](#) and [Feed Matters: Satisfying the Feed Demand of Aquaculture](#).

## Reported:

Salmon farming  
should not be allowed  
in protected areas.

## Reality:

Locating salmon farms along migration routes of wild fish and cetaceans runs counter to environmental protection and is a potential breach of EU law. Whales, dolphins and porpoises are being put at risk by noise alarms (Acoustic Deterrent Devices) used by salmon farms to scare off seals. Read more via [Warning salmon farm devices could hit wildlife tourism](#); [Deafening Impact of Salmon Farms on Cetaceans](#); [Sunday Herald: "Health of whales, dolphins and porpoises put at risk by underwater alarms"](#); [Cetaceans Sound Alarm On Salmon Farms - new research sparks EC complaint & call to ban Acoustic Deterrent Devices](#) and [Large-scale underwater noise pollution from Acoustic Deterrent Devices \(ADDs\) on the west coast of Scotland](#).

For more information please see [Scottish Salmon Watch](#) and read:

[UK Government's 'Sustainable Seas Inquiry'](#)

[Hard Evidence: Dossier of Data on Lice Diseases & Mortalities at Scottish Salmon Farms](#)  
[Scottish Salmon Farming 101](#)

[Loch Duart - The \(Really Not Very\) Sustainable Salmon Company](#)

[Marine Harmfest Scotland](#)

[The Scottish Salmon Polluters Organisation](#)

[25 Years of Scottish Salmon Shame](#)

