

Trout & Salmon, January 2013

Salmon-farm expansion

Dear Editor

The Scottish Government have opened the market for Scottish farmed salmon to the Chinese. If 1% of the Chinese eat Scottish farmed salmon then fish farm production will be required to increase by 100%. Currently a 50% proposed increase is on the cards.

You would think the battle cry would have gone out led by Rivers and Fisheries Trusts (RAFTS), followed by Association of Salmon Fishery Boards, Atlantic Salmon Trust and the Salmon & Trout Association.

But no – seemingly before having time for a cup of tea RAFTS have delivered to Scottish Government their “answer” – The Managing Interactions of Aquaculture Project (MIAP).

RAFTS have put together this project to cater and accommodate for this massive proposed expansion on the West Coast of Scotland which is already devastated and fragile by the effects of fish farming on the wild salmon and sea trout. Guidelines by RAFTS in conjunction with Scottish Government are to be produced with “science” to find new salmon farm sites in inshore lochs for this proposed expansion.

RAFTS, which is the key distributor of funding Fishery Trusts, has unsurprisingly been all too willing to accept Scottish Government funding for MIAP. To help gain credibility with this massive expansion project RAFTS have asked some Fishery Boards and Trusts to add their fisheries data support to indicate the initiative has included the “wild interests”.

In reality it seems that with the likely exception of those enjoying conflicting interests with the aquaculture industry alongside their “duties” as board/trustees to the wild fish, few are familiar with MIAP. Those with little understanding may have been led to believe it is better to be “in the boat than out”, however support from the “wild fish” fraternity will ensure that planning for these new inshore fish farms is a breeze for the Scottish Government.

It is unbelievable the above named wild fish organisations who we have subscribed and donated to with the purpose of protecting the wild fish and therefore exposing the detrimental effects of the fish farming industry with expensive science and law will not voice their opposition and are clearly all behind the RAFTS project.

All these organisations along with RAFTS must now explain their motives – have they caved into Alex Salmond and his desperate drive for Independence by agreeing to forfeit one of the most precious jewels we have on the west coast in favour of more polluting salmon farms to feed the Chinese market? While the integrity of our Scottish fisheries organisations is left in tatters, the industry’s largely foreign shareholders must be delighted with their sudden good fortune.

Yours faithfully

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