

Report on Fish Welfare for Scottish Government

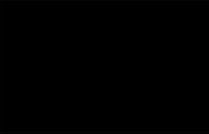
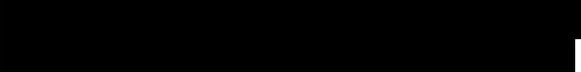
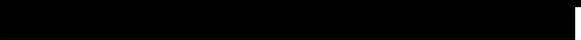
Part 1: General details

1. Reference number	FS 0426 Loch Creran
2. Name and address	Scottish Sea farm Laurel Ho/Laurelhill Business Park, Stirling Postcode FK7 9JQ
3. Location of Fish (if different from above)	Loch Creran (B) Units South Shian, Benderloch Oban, Argyll Postcode PA37 1SB
4. Date of Visit	10/11/2020
5. Time of visit	09:30

Part 2: Detail

6. Present at visit:

(List the names and roles of attendees at the visit)

 (Marine Scotland Inspector)  Scottish Sea Farms Limited)  Scottish Sea Farms Limited)  APHA)
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7. Reason for Visit:

(state specific reason for visit i.e. routine visit, complaint etc. If a complaint include by whom)

Complaint received by email from a person who wants to be anonymous.



8. Background

(include nature of site (sea/freshwater), species, number, production aim, production cycle, source, history of unit, any recent changes, transport used, veterinary and other advisers).

Scottish Sea Farms has several locations around Scotland, in that area of Oban they are completing the life cycle of the salmon. They have the hatchery where salmon grow from egg in incubators then into tanks before they are transported to the sea water farms. When salmon are the right size and weight the salmon is transported to the farm in site B in Loch Creran. At the time of harvesting, after around 9-12 months, salmon is transported by a wellboat to the processing plant facility located beside Loch Creran. These boats contain large vats of water that closely replicate the farm water, to control salmon behaviour and stress level.

Last routine inspection by Marine Scotland was in March 2020.

New Seawater site: Atlantic salmon farm site B FS0246, with a total of 14 units cages but only 12 of them are stocked on 06/11/2020 and only 9 units stocked at the time of the visit on 10/11/2020.

Visit carried out with Marine Scotland inspector ([REDACTED]) as part of the APHA welfare inspection. COVID protocol in place.

FS 0246 site B at Loch Creran:

9 Units - Visited

5 Unit - Not visited as not stocked

Total number of salmon: 194308

Average weight: 3.1kg

Stocking density= 9 kg /m3. (50 kg x cube is rspca standard)

9. Findings

(include disease situation and duration, mortalities and other significant records, feeding patterns, advice sought, diagnosis, treatment, vaccinations, culling, expectations etc).

FS0246 farm site B (VISITED) 14 units, but only 9 stocked at the time of the visit.

Atlantic salmon total of 194308.

Average weight on 06th November 2020 was 3.1kg. Low stocking density due to the mortality records and the harvesting.

When the Veterinary Health Plan was agreed at the start of the crop, harvesting was scheduled to start in November – this would have been via passive grading to removed the largest fish at this time. Harvesting was therefore basically started on schedule but, because of the incident, the process changed to remove the worst-affected pens in their entirety, rather than subject the fish to the extra process of passive grading. So the schedule was the same but the details changed to take account of fish condition.

Stocking density always complying with 50 kg x cube is RSPCA standard, according with the records, on 10/11/2020 was 9 kg/m3.

DISEASE situation:

This site had an algal bloom in late August/early September (around week 34/35) which lead to damage on gills of fish. Due to the environmental incident all fish were affected but to very varying degrees. This meant that lice treatments could not be applied immediately after the incident was found because fish needed to recover before the treatments.

The algae bloom started around 30th September (the middle of week 40). Feeding was stopped, this is standard practice as it reduces exposure and drops metabolic oxygen demand. In addition, airlift systems & aeration were installed to improve dissolved oxygen levels. Plankton levels and gill condition were initially monitored by site staff and gills were examined during mortality removal additional of the routine checks that are done in weekly sampling.

Due to Covid- related restrictions the veterinary services visited site B on 2nd October.

Mortalities have gone up on this location:

Week 41/2020 - 05/10 - 32471 (8.25%),

Week 42/2020 - 12/10 - 24021 (6.66%),

Week 43/2020 - 19/10 – 29101 (8.64%),

Week 44/2020 - 26/10 – 1769 (0.57%),

Week 45/2020 - 02/11 – 1647 (0.54%) Not completed yet.

First 3 weeks (w40, w41 and w42) after the algae bloom, with these levels, mortality removal was a priority so there was no formal culling in these weeks.

Recent mortality reportable to marine Scotland as above threshold. On 12th October 2020 as mortalities were coming down a thermolicer treatment was applied and a second treatment has just been completed.

Adult female (AF) lice levels:

Week 40: 2.54 AF,

Week 42: 5.18 AF,

Week 44: 0.82 AF returned below CoGP following successful treatment, and has remained below CoGP since then.

SEA LICE TREATMENTS:

Week 29 - Physical treatment (Thermolicer) only Pen 3

Week 32/33 - Physical treatment (Thermolicer) All pens

Week 34/35 - Physical (SFI) All pens

Week 36/37 - Physical treatment (Thermolicer) All pens

Week 39 - Slice 2mg/g PREMIX Medicated feeding All pens

Week 42/43 - Physical treatment (Thermolicer) All pens

Week 44/45 - Physical treatment (Thermolicer) All pens

The premises is applying lice treatments, removing and culling damaged fish, and harvesting affected pens.

The site will be left fallow for a cycle by March 2021 (this was communicated at the last fish inspectorate inspection in March 2020). In terms of health the farm management have advised they are doing what they are supposed to.

There are photographs taken 23/10, after the first thermolicer treatment, that show damaged fish and heavy lice burdens. According with the records photographs must be taken after the thermolicer treatment but before they were culling the damaged and not recoverable fish.

ABP: mortalities are collected and pumped out with a pressured pipe directly to the ABP point for incineration on site. So no ABP waste is sent out of the premises.

People/employees 6 on site B.

Alert system with generator in place for the oxygen level, which is monitored/ recirculating system x water.

Feed from - Biomar (ufacs certified).

Records inspected remotely on 06/11/20 as Covid protocol with FHI-Marine Scotland: no issue.

The farm follows:

RSPCA

Code of good practice (SSPO) standard

Certified by Label rouge(Franch)

Environmental ISO14001

Global gap
Protected Geographical Indicator

10. Action

(outline any necessary actions)

During the visit done on 10/11/2020 and inspecting all the units stocked, only 3 salmon were found unrecoverable to be culled. All of them were captured easily and culled by [REDACTED], after the inspection although the fish presented score 3 of 5 for the damage of the gills the reason to be unrecoverable was due to physical trauma due to a physical impact instead of chronic disease. Although the levels of physical trauma are not a significant sign of lack of welfare at the moment, as it was not a problem before in this site, it is clear that gills damaged and the sea lice increased the stress of the salmon. All actions taken to treat the algae bloom and the sea lice were focused to improved the welfare of the animals as well.

Some of the units were found more affected by the sea lice but all the fish inspected was found with signs of recovering injuries. During the whole inspection only one fish was found with an small fresh injury.

Due to there still being sea lice activity on the site, a further thermolicer treatment will be carried out next week.
(week commencing 16/11/2020)

Marine Scotland didn't take any sample because the fish culled during the inspection was not related to the sea lice issue.

Although the treatment was complicated because following the algae bloom issue, the fish was not in the best condition (due to the gills were damaged) to commence treatment for sea lice, all the decisions made by the veterinary team and the [REDACTED] for SSF were appropriate according to the circumstances presented. For that reason APHA is not taking further actions.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

As the actions taken by the company were found appropriated, the only recommendation was to continuing with the treatment plan implemented by [REDACTED] for SSF). Ensuring rigorous inspections, thermolicer treatments and culling to ensure animal welfare is safeguarded at all times.

12. Overall Assessment: Compliant

** delete as appropriate*

Signature

Name in
BLOCK LETTERS

Date

Tel No.

APHA office address

Field Services Inverurie
Thainstone Court
Inverurie, Aberdeenshire
AB51 5YA

DATA PROTECTION

For information on how we handle personal data please go to www.gov.uk and search Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.