

Scottish Salmon Watch, 5 February 2020



[Dear RSPCA - Please Stop Certifying Scottish Salmon!](#)

Campaigners are calling on the RSPCA - including vice-presidents Chris Packham, Brian May, Brian Blessed, Bill Oddie, Caroline Lucas and Peter Egan as well as royal patron Her Majesty the Queen - to stop certifying Scottish salmon as 'welfare-friendly'. Despite horrific welfare abuse, around 70% of Scottish salmon production is currently certified via RSPCA Assured (formerly Freedom Food) which is owned and controlled by the RSPCA.



"Scottish farmed salmon is a welfare nightmare which does not warrant certification by RSPCA Assured," urges the [letter sent to the RSPCA](#). "Shame on the RSPCA executive and shame on RSPCA Assured for profiting at the expense of the welfare of farmed salmon. End the suffering of salmon now by pulling the plug on Scottish salmon including the Thermolicer torture chamber. Please do not allow another 25 years of welfare abuse and pollution by Scottish salmon farms."

Earlier this week, [Save Seil Sound made a formal complaint to the Scottish Charity Regulator](#) about the charitable status of Freedom Food Limited ([re-branded as RSPCA Assured in 2015](#)) which is a [subsidiary charitable company owned by the RSPCA](#).



**Ewan Kennedy**  
@ewangkennedy

Save Seil Sound have made a formal complaint to [@ScotCharityReg](#) about the charitable status of Freedom Food Limited, who sell licences to fish farm companies. What they call "farming" is intrinsically cruel; the public would not tolerate it if they could see it.

9:01 AM · Feb 5, 2020 from [Scotland, United Kingdom](#) · [Twitter for iPad](#)



**Don Staniford**  
@TheGAAIA

As RSPCA 'VIPs' you have the power to stop suffering on salmon farms in Scotland - please tell the RSPCA executive to end certification of Scottish salmon!  
[@rspcaassured](#) [tinyurl.com/wn5g3p6](https://tinyurl.com/wn5g3p6) [@ChrisGPackham](#)  
[@brianblessed](#) [@BillOddie](#) [@DrBrianMay](#) [@PeterEgan6](#)  
[@CarolineLucas](#) #RSPCA



RSPCA (England & Wales) and 9 others

7:22 AM · Feb 5, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

The Sunday Times [reported over the weekend \(2 February\)](#) that scientist Dr. Lynne Sneddon - a world renowned expert on fish welfare from the University of Liverpool - has questioned the RSPCA's certification of factory farmed salmon.

# Scientist hits out at RSPCA for backing salmon farms

Mark Macaskill

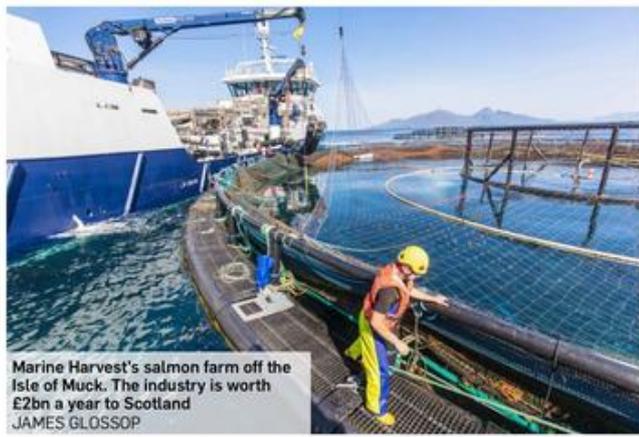
A scientist who claims farmed salmon in Scotland endure "heavy-duty suffering" has questioned one of Britain's largest animal charities for its support of the £2bn industry.

Dr Lynne Sneddon, director of bioveterinary science at Liverpool University, said evidence that intensive farming can harm fish raised questions for Scottish aquaculture.

She described the suffering as unacceptable and challenged the RSPCA for endorsing 150 farms as ethical food producers amid research that suggests a popular lice treatment can cause pain.

Sneddon spoke out after examining a dossier of photographs, including some released by the Scottish government, of farmed fish covered in lesions, ulcers and open wounds.

"These fish are obviously



Marine Harvest's salmon farm off the Isle of Muck. The industry is worth £2bn a year to Scotland  
JAMES GLOSSOP

damaged, so they will be in pain. If you walked past a field and saw a sheep or a cow with a massive patch of skin missing, there would be a public uproar. But because salmon are farmed under the water, all of this is hidden," said Sneddon.

"I think really that these fish should not be allowed to live in

this kind of state . . . and I would say this is totally unacceptable."

Eddie Bowles, a solicitor with Surrey law firm Advocates for Animals, said the dossier, compiled by

Don Staniford, a critic of salmon farming, indicated "systemic and obvious" pain and suffering that could justify

legal action against the Scottish government for breaches of the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. "It appears that there is a strong legal case to answer," she said.

Sneddon, who studied at Glasgow University and the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, said the skin of fish is covered in nociceptive nerves that detect potentially painful stimuli. It suggests that being infested with sea lice, or being pumped through a Thermolicer — a machine widely used by Scottish fish farmers that heats water to kill the parasites — is likely to inflict pain.

In December, a study published in Veterinary and Animal Science monitored the response of fish to temperatures of 28C and above, and observed "instant behavioural responses indicative of nociception or pain".

In 2018, Kristin Ottesen of Norwegian firm HaVet linked head injuries in fish with being exposed to heated water for 30 seconds.

Sneddon said the empirical evidence strongly suggested that thermolicers "should not be used".

Watch an exclusive interview with Dr. Sneddon [online here](#)



Don Staniford, Director of [Scottish Salmon Watch](#), said:

"There is a huge disconnect between the marketing of Scottish salmon as 'healthy', 'responsibly sourced' and 'welfare friendly' via RSPCA Assured and the gruesome images of welfare abuse on salmon farms. It is painfully obvious that salmon are suffering from serious and systematic abuse both on factory farms and via mechanical treatments such as the Thermolicer. The damning photographic evidence graphically illustrates unnecessary suffering, pain and widespread welfare problems on RSPCA certified salmon farms. Scottish Ministers are clearly failing to police the welfare nightmare that is salmon farming. Offenders must be prosecuted as a matter of urgency to end the torture and suffering."



Scottish Salmon Watch is [taking legal action against Scottish Ministers and salmon farming companies for breaching the Animal Health & Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006.](#)



Read Scottish Salmon Watch's letter to the RSPCA in full [online here](#)



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5 February 2020

### RSPCA Assured Welfare Abuse on Salmon Farms

Scottish Salmon Watch would like to brief the RSPCA's [executive team](#), [Board of Trustees](#), [ambassadors](#) as well as [patrons](#), [vice-presidents](#) and [celebrity supporters](#) on the systemic welfare abuse on RSPCA Assured salmon farms in Scotland. The message is a simple one - stop certifying factory farmed salmon via RSPCA Assured. The certification of farmed salmon via RSPCA Assured is bringing the RSPCA into disrepute and is endorsing welfare problems on salmon farms. Please end the torture now and stop the certification of salmon!

In conclusion, Scottish Salmon Watch recommends the immediate cessation of certification of salmon farms by RSPCA Assured and the withdrawal of the "[RSPCA Welfare Standards for Farmed Atlantic Salmon](#)" (February 2018).



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**Read more via:**

[Press Release: "Welfare Abuse on Scottish Salmon Farms - Legal Action Vs Scottish Ministers & Salmon Farming Companies"](#)

[Sunday Times: "Scientist hits out at RSPCA for backing Scottish salmon farms"](#)

[Video Exclusive: Dr Lynne Sneddon on Welfare Abuse on Scottish Salmon Farms](#)

[Photo Dossier of Diseased, Deformed & Abused Scottish Salmon](#)

[The Faces of Scottish Salmon - the Ugly Truth Exposed](#)

[Media Backgrounder: The Welfare Nightmare of Scottish Salmon](#)

[New science papers turn up heat on the Thermolicer](#)



Don Staniford  
@TheGAAIA



As ambassadors for the RSPCA please help stop suffering & cruelty on Scotland's @rspcaassured salmon farms! [tinyurl.com/wn5g3p6](https://tinyurl.com/wn5g3p6) Surely you did not sign up to promote welfare abuse? @Mattjohnsons @P\_Wicks01 @BellaLack @NaturalistDara @EyalBooker @katelawler @VictoriaS #RSPCA



11:04 AM · Feb 5, 2020 · Twitter Web App

