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### **RSPCA endorsement of the killing of seals by Freedom Food certified salmon farms**

Could you please provide details on the number of seals killed at salmon farms certified via the RSPCA's Freedom Food scheme?

In view of the fact that over 300 seals have been killed by Scottish salmon farmers in the last 18 months and the fact that 60% of Scottish salmon farms are currently certified by the RSPCA, the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture (GAAIA) estimates the number of [RSPCA-sponsored](#) seal killings at over 150 seals.

Moreover, the RSPCA-sponsored killing of seals is set to increase even further. According to the [Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation](#), "more than 90% of Scottish salmon will be farmed to RSPCA Freedom Food welfare standards within the next two years."

However, if you could provide accurate figures including the names of the companies and farms killing seals under the Freedom Food scheme it would be much appreciated.

Please note that RSPCA-certified companies including [Loch Duart](#), [Scottish Salmon Company](#), [Hjaltland Seafarms](#), [Marine Harvest](#), [Meridian](#) and [Scottish Seafarms](#) were named recently by Marine Scotland as serial seal killers. According to information supplied via [Freedom of Information](#), the mass murderers of over 200 Scottish seals during 2011 were as follows:

Hjaltland Seafarms Ltd – 50 seals killed  
The Scottish Salmon Co Ltd – 45 seals killed  
Scottish Seafarms Ltd – 37 seals killed  
Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd – 34 seals killed  
Northern Isles Salmon Ltd (Meridian group) – 22 seals killed  
Lakeland Marine Farm Ltd – 17 seals killed  
West Minch Salmon Ltd – 9 seals killed  
Dawnfresh Farming Ltd – 6 seals killed  
Loch Duart Ltd – 5 seals killed  
Bound Skerries Seafoods Ltd – 4 seals killed



In 2012 (up to April), another 81 seals were killed by the following Scottish salmon farming companies (all but one if not every company is certified by the RSPCA):

- The Scottish Salmon Company – 21 seals killed
- Scottish Sea Farms Ltd – 17 seals killed
- Hjalmland Seafarms Ltd – 15 seals killed
- Meridian Salmon Group – 13 seals killed
- Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd – 9 seals killed
- Loch Duart Ltd – 5 seals killed
- Dawnfresh Farming Ltd – 1 seals killed

Read the correspondence with the Scottish Government in full [online here](#)

The RSPCA’s support for seal killing is nothing short of shameful. How can the RSPCA certify salmon farms as welfare-friendly under the Freedom Food scheme when seals are being shot as a first not last resort?

The ‘[RSPCA Welfare Standards for Farmed Salmon](#)’ (2010) states that repeated shooting of seals will result in the site being suspended:

**HP 6.14 \*** The producer must be able to demonstrate to the Freedom Food Assessor or the RSPCA Farm Livestock Officer that all of the procedures leading up to the point of last resort have been mobilised.

\* **i** The repeated shooting of seals without having deployed all of the measures leading to a last resort scenario, will result in the site being suspended from the scheme pending further investigation.

However, a Government survey found that only 20% of Scottish salmon farms even have predator nets. “A government survey showed that 80 per cent of salmon farms in Scotland do not have anti predator nets,” reported the [Shetland News](#) in March 2011.

How many sites has the RSPCA actually suspended from the Freedom Food scheme?

Moreover, the number of seals killed by salmon farms in Scotland (over half of which are certified by the RSPCA) is increasing not decreasing. [Seal Scotland reported](#) last month that: "In the first year of the government's new seal licensing system they claim that 461 seals have been shot. The latest annual figures which cover the period from 31 January 2011 to 31 January 2012 can be found at [Licences & Returns: 2011](#). The government claims this is a success story - that these figures are far lower than the 3,000 seals that environmental groups had claimed were being killed each year. In fact a Freedom of Information request shows that the number of seals reported to the government as being shot over the three years before licences were introduced was 66, 34 and 10."

Read more background via "[Scotland's Seal Killers Named & Shamed!](#)"

How many of these seals were killed at RSPCA-certified salmon farms? Is the number of RSPCA-sponsored seals being killed increasing year after year?

In today's Press & Journal, the [Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation](#) defended the killing of seals by saying the welfare of farmed salmon took precedence over seals:

THE PRESS AND JOURNAL  
Monday, July 2, 2012

## ENVIRONMENT

# Salmon farmers defend seal culls

Fish farmers in the north have defended the practice of culling seals after the Scottish Government revealed the names of companies responsible for shooting hundreds of the creatures.

Loch Duart Ltd, which has salmon farms in Sutherland and the Hebrides, features on the list of almost a dozen firms known to have shot seals - under licence - over the past 18 months. It culled 10 of the mammals over that period.

A spokesman for the company said: "Farming in a wild, natural environment will create interactions between farms and

### "The welfare of your stock must take precedence"

wild predators. Whether it is foxes and lambs or wild or farmed salmon and seals, the principles should remain the same - do all you can to keep them out and if all fails then the welfare of your stock must take precedence."

Industry opponents have accused the companies and shops selling their produce of having "blood on their hands".

They are angry that the Scottish Government has refused to reveal precise locations of the killings.

Marine Scotland said such detail would jeopardise fish farms and their workers, leaving them open to possible retribution from activists.

According to the official record, 310 seals have been shot by Scotland's fish farmers since the start of 2011.

Further press coverage on a potential ban on U.S. imports of Scottish farmed salmon due to a breach of the Marine Mammal Protection Act appeared in yesterday's [Sunday Times](#) and [Sunday Express](#):

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# Fish exports targeted over seal culling

Protesters say that fish farms are slaughtering seals and their pups



**Mark Macaskill**

THE United States government is being urged to consider a ban on imports of Scottish farmed salmon until seal culling ceases.

More than 300 seals, thought to include pregnant females and pups, have been killed in the past 18 months along the west coast of Scotland.

Many are shot in the head by trained marksmen, with high-powered rifles. Eyewitnesses claim to have found seals dying slowly after being shot in the body.

Fish farm companies insist the culls are a last resort to stop seals attacking underwater cages and snatching salmon. A single seal, they say, is capable of eating thousands of fish in a matter of weeks, undermining an industry that produces 135,000 tonnes of farmed salmon each year, has annual exports worth £2bn and supports 6,000 jobs. Last year, the UK accounted for 41,000 tonnes — almost half — of exports of Scottish farmed salmon.

Conservation groups, however, insist the culls are unnecessary and accuse companies of failing to invest in anti-predator nets to deter seals. They are lobbying the US government, which is seeking to tighten its rules on food imports, to ban all farmed salmon from British companies that shoot seals.

One area of concern for the US Department of Commerce is foreign firms that kill marine mammals during production processes. They have been pressed details of fish farm companies licensed by Scottish authorities to shoot seals.

They include Scottish Sea Farms, a firm which supplies Marks & Spencer with farmed salmon for its Lochranear brand. Since January 2011, it has killed 84 seals. Others include The Scottish Salmon Company, which has shot 66 of the mammals; and Marine Harvest, which has killed 43.

"I am hopeful that with pressure from US-based animal welfare groups we will succeed in a ban on the import of non-sustainably sourced salmon into the UK," said John Robins of Animal Concern, a Glasgow-based animal rights group.

Kate Roddie, the head of campaigns at Animal Aid, one of Britain's largest animal welfare bodies, said: "Seals eat fish and they must do so in order to survive. Yet, because fish farming operations ruthlessly pursue profits, hundreds of seals continue to be shot. Animal Aid supports the call for a ban on the importation of farmed salmon to the UK."

A spokesman for a marine tourism business on the west coast of Scotland said he had found young pups shot by marksmen. "I once recovered two female pregnant seals that had been shot and took them to safety. It found no trace of salmon in their stomachs."

"The approach of fish farms to shoot seals which pass close by, there's no effort made to identify the actual seals which are causing damage."

About 20% of Scottish salmon farms use anti-predator nets which create a perimeter around fish farm sites, preventing seals attacking underwater cages and snatching salmon. Conservationists say most companies are unwilling to use such nets as they can be costly to install and maintain.

The industry says nets are impractical and can kill marine wildlife. Other forms of deterrent, such as acoustic devices, are being considered.

Scott Lambdough, the chief executive of the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation, said killing seals was a last resort. "Fish farmers have to be able to protect their fish in the same way as a shepherd or chicken farmer would protect their livestock against lions."

The Scottish Salmon Company said it used "rigorous measures" to deter predator attacks, including immersion nets and acoustic devices. Steve Mackenzie of Marine Harvest said it was investing in equipment such as weighted nets. "But seals will attempt to attack farmed salmon regardless of the deterrents."

A spokeswoman for Marks & Spencer said: "Scotland's Sea Farms have a policy of promoting the use of acoustic deterrent devices and are trialling the next generation of them. Considerable work has been carried out in this area since 2009."

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Picture: JOHN GILES/PA

# Fish ban call over seal culls

ANIMAL rights groups have called for a ban on Scottish salmon after new figures revealed that fish farms killed more than 300 seals in just one year.

Campaigners say retailers have "blood on their hands" after the shocking extent of the legal cull was revealed after a Freedom of Information request.

The data, supplied by Marine Scotland, showed hundreds of the mammals were destroyed over the 12 months to April.

And now the activists are compiling a "name and shame" list of the firms, which "murder" seals "wholly unnecessarily".

The Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture (GAAIA) and the Save Our Seals Fund (SOSF) repeated the plea to ban salmon imports while asking supermarkets to stop sourcing "seal-unfriendly" fish.

Don Stamford, of the GAAIA, said: "Scotland's seal killers should hang their heads in shame and hang up their guns."

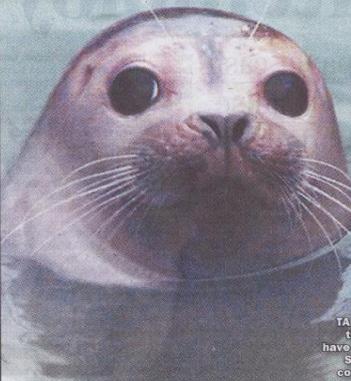
"Supermarkets such as Sainsbury's and Tesco, which condone the killing of seals by selling seal-unfriendly farmed salmon have blood on their hands."

The SOSF Scotland has approached the US Department of Commerce to use existing legislation to ban the import of Scottish farmed salmon until they install seal exclusion nets.

According to the groups, only a fifth of the country's fish farms use the predator nets, yet the law says the animals cannot be shot without a licence — and even then, destruction must be as a "last resort".

But the Scottish Government insisted strict licensing means seals are given an "unprecedented level of protection".

A spokeswoman said "few" animals target fish entering fisheries and nets, or attack farms, and added: "Licensing is necessary to control the removal of these seals, as a last-resort measure after any non-lethal alternatives have failed."



TARGETED: More than 300 seals have been killed in Scotland in the course of a year

Read correspondence with the U.S. Government calling for a ban on imports of farmed salmon - [online here](#)

As John Robins, Secretary of Save Our Seals Fund, [said](#) (29 June): “We have asked the US Department of Commerce to use existing US marine mammal protection laws to ban the import of salmon from Scottish floating factory fish farms. I hope the US Government can force Scottish salmon farmers to install seal exclusion nets, something the Scottish Government and the RSPCA have disgracefully failed to do. When you buy Scottish farmed salmon, even RSPCA-endorsed Scottish farmed salmon, you pay for bullets to shoot seals.”

In conclusion, if the RSPCA can divulge site specific details of the numbers of seals shot it would be much appreciated. How much blood does the RSCPA have on their hands?



GAAIA has asked the Scottish Information Commissioner to force Marine Scotland to name all the sites so this information will hopefully be available soon anyway (read more details [online here](#)). Further information on the killing of seals by salmon farmers is available [online here](#). If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Don Staniford

[Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture](#)

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