



Police Scotland Wildlife Crime Unit: Contactus@scotland.pnn.police.uk
Animal & Plant Health Agency: APHA.Scotland@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Scottish Government Fish Health Inspectorate: ms.fishhealth@gov.scot

11 June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Urgent Call for Action:
Unnecessary Suffering at The Scottish Salmon Company's farm at Aird Ardheslaig in
Loch Shieldaig (Loch Torridon)**

Scottish Salmon Watch ask you to investigate an issue of welfare abuse, unnecessary suffering and cruelty as a matter of urgency. We believe immediate action is required in order to end the shocking treatment of farmed salmon at [The Scottish Salmon Company's salmon farm at Aird Ardheslaig in Loch Shieldaig \(NG78945605\)](#).

Receiving Water : Loch Sheildaig



Scottish Salmon Watch visited the site on Saturday (8 June) and was mortified to witness farmed salmon gasping for air at the surface and covered in white lesions with visible damage to snouts, eyes, tails, fins and flanks.





Scottish Salmon Watch believes that the farmed salmon should be immediately slaughtered in order to put an end to their misery. We also believe there is sufficient evidence to launch a prosecution against The Scottish Salmon Company for negligence and neglect.

Scottish Salmon Watch believes that video footage captured via a Go Pro camera inserted directly inside three of the cages provides graphic evidence of breaches of the [Animal Health and Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) - in particular in relation to [Unnecessary Suffering](#) (Section 19), [Cruel Operations](#) (Section 21) and [Ensuring Welfare of Animals](#) (Section 24).

The evidence shows The Scottish Salmon Company may have:

- 1) Caused by its or their acts of omissions unnecessary suffering to the fish at the salmon farm

2) Failed to take such steps as are reasonable to prevent suffering

3) Failed to take such steps as are reasonable to ensure the needs of its fish are met to the extent required by industry practice, all pursuant to Sections 19, 21 and 24 of the [Animal Health and Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#).

Whereas we are aware that The Scottish Salmon Company may attempt to demonstrate that it has undertaken chemical and non-mechanical treatments to address the numbers of lice at the site, the scale of the mutilation of the fish around the head and fins show that the treatments were ineffective and/or have failed and that no reasonable salmon farm manager should tolerate the scale of damage shown.







Such damage has occurred over a sustained period and has not just happened overnight - this is clearly as case of prolonged suffering and months of ongoing agony.





Video footage detailing the visit on Saturday (8 June) will be made available as soon as possible (I've only just returned this evening from the trip). The above images are poor quality screen grabs but you hopefully get the overall picture of welfare abuse.

Please note that Scottish Salmon Watch only spent 45 minutes at the site filming, only filmed at three out of perhaps a dozen cages, had poor light (the weather was overcast and it was between 6.15 am and 7 am) and the camera only penetrated a few feet into the cages. Scottish Salmon Watch dreads to think what welfare nightmare and what scale of mortalities are towards the bottom of the nets.

Moreover, if left unchecked the suffering over the higher Summer temperatures will surely go off the scale. Please note [recent comments in Salmon Business](#) from an industry health manager that disease problems on salmon farms are expected to become more "painful":

Mowi Health Manager: “It can be a painful September and October for the salmon industry in Scotland”

News by **Stian Olsen** - 24 May 2019

Amoebic gill disease (AGD), has previously caused significant mortalities to the salmon industry in Scotland. Now Mowi Scotland is preparing for a tough autumn ahead.

This was confirmed by Sabina Maclean, Health Manager at Mowi Scotland when she entered the podium during day 2 of the Pathos Forum in Ålesund, Norway. The seminar is organized by the fish health and analysis company PatoGen.

“We do not have problems with AGD now, but we are waiting for it,” she said, before adding:

“I am afraid that the hot winter can cause problems when it comes to ADG. It may be a painful September and October for the salmon industry in Scotland,” Maclean said.

In 2018, gill infections in salmon were the second cause of mortality (biomass and number wise) in Scotland. AGD accounted for four per cent of mortality caused by gill infection.

But it wasn't just AGD Maclean talked about. Maclean was invited by PatoGen to general salmon health in Scotland, like sea lice and Pancreas disease (PD), and it was a clearly moved Maclean who spoke about mortality rates in the salmon industry.

“Excuse me,” she said, before continuing.

According to the data [published online via Scotland's Aquaculture](#), the salmon farm was first stocked in December 2017 so has been in operation now for 18 months. The latest biomass stocking data details 1,348 tonnes in March 2019 with maximum biomass of 2,400 tonnes. It seems to be The Scottish Salmon Company's plans to harvest as late as September 2019 so there could be a further three months of suffering ahead for the hundreds of thousands of salmon crammed in the cages.

March	2019	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V6	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1348	More
February	2019	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V6	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1338	More
January	2019	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V6	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1288	More
December	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1216	More
November	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1731	More
October	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1682	More
September	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1573	More
August	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	1171	More
July	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	965	More
June	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	696	More
May	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	574	More
April	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	431	More
March	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	351	More
February	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	244	More
January	2018	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	162	More
December	2017	AIR1	Aird Ardhessaig	CAR/L/1002917/C1/V5	The Scottish Salmon Company Ltd	116	More

Scottish Salmon Watch calls on Police Scotland's Wildlife Crime Unit, the Animal & Plant Health Agency and the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate to conduct an unannounced site inspection this week to gauge the level of suffering and judge for yourselves the scale of welfare abuse. The site is close to the village of Shieldaig where [Marine Scotland Science has a research facility](#) and presumably has simple access to a boat.

Please also note [via Twitter last night](#):



Salmon Research

@salmonresearch

Following

Public advised to avoid eating shellfish from Inner Loch Torridon (along the shore between Sheildaig and Inveralligin) until further notice.

No mention of the influence ON or FROM the gauntlet of salmon farms in this area of algal outbreak.



10:58 PM - 10 Jun 2019

This was in response to a [Tweet](#) and [press release](#) from Highland Council yesterday afternoon:

Public advised to avoid eating shellfish from Inner Loch Torridon

This article was published
10 Jun 2019

[NEWS ARCHIVE](#)

[News RSS feed](#)

Highland Council's Environmental Health team have identified raised levels of naturally occurring algal toxins following routine monitoring in coastal waters at Inner Loch Torridon.

Eating shellfish such as cockles, mussels, oysters or razor fish from these areas may pose a health risk arising from the consumption of these algal toxins.

As a sensible precaution, people should avoid eating shellfish from this area (along the shore between Sheildaig and Inveralligin) until further notice.

It is important to note that cooking does not remove risks from consumption. Commercial shellfish harvesters in the area have been contacted by the council.

For further information please refer to Food Standards Scotland shellfish website: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/business-and-industry/industry-specific-advice/fish-and-shellfish>



The Highland Council
@HighlandCouncil

Following

Public advised to avoid eating shellfish from Inner Loch Torridon (along the shore between Sheildaig and Inveralligin) until further notice.
[ow.ly/PeCp30oUPTR](https://www.ow.ly/PeCp30oUPTR)

4:29 PM - 10 Jun 2019

Yours sincerely,

Don Staniford

Director of Scottish Salmon Watch

