The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

13 February 2022

Dear Scottish Ministers,

Official Reporting of Infectious Salmon Anaemia in Scottish Salmon

Could you please provide further information on notifications of Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA) in Scottish salmon as reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) by the Scottish Government and/or DEFRA?

A Freedom of Information disclosure on 2 February 2022 from the Scottish Government detailed ISA in farmed Atlantic salmon – with 369,195 fish listed as 'susceptible' - in May 2021:

SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON THE NOTIFICATION OF OIE-LISTED AQUATIC ANIMAL DISEASES AND INFECTIONS

1. Report date: 15/09/2021 | 2. Reporting period: Year 2021 Semester ☒ January - June

3. Country: SCOTLAND

4. Name of the sender: <REDACTED – PERSONAL INFORMATION>

5. Position of the sender: FISH HEALTH INSPECTORATE TECHNICAL MANAGER

Infectious salmon anaemia virus (Inf. with) (HPR-deleted or HPR0 genotypes)

6. Occurrence code	Farmed fish	Wild fish
	☐ Disease present	☐ Disease present
	☐ Disease limited to one or more zones	☐ Disease limited to one or more zones
	☐ Infection/infestation	☐ Infection/infestation
	☒ Infection/infestation limited to one or more zones	☐ Infection/infestation limited to one or more zones
	☒ Disease absent Date of last occurrence 08/05/2012	☒ Disease absent Date of last occurrence 08/05/2012

SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON THE NOTIFICATION OF OIE-LISTED AQUATIC ANIMAL DISEASES AND INFECTIONS

Part 2. Quantitative information

1. Disease name: Infectious salmon anaemia

SCOTLAND Atlantic salmon ☒ Farmed fish 5th month

4. Number of outbreaks

New	Total
1	1

9. Total number of

Susceptible	Cases	Deaths	Killed and disposed of	Killed for commercial or own use	Vaccinated in response to the outbreak(s)
369,195	1	None reported	0	0	0

Scamon Scotland reported earlier this week (10 February 2022):

The OIE report filed in September 2021 by the Scottish Government via DEFRA (or vice versa – a FOI request to DEFRA is seeking further information) detailed a 'disease notification' for both farmed and wild fish but only 4 samples were collected for farmed salmon and zero for wild fish:

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1. Report date:	15/09/2021	2. Reporting period:	Year	2021	Semester
4. Name of the sender:	<REDACTED – PERSONAL INFORMATION>		5. Position of the sender:		
☒ January - June	☐ July - December	3. Country:	SCOTLAND		

FISH HEALTH INSPECTORATE TECHNICAL MANAGER

Infectious salmon anaemia virus (Inf. with) (HPR-deleted or HPR0 genotypes)

8. Preventive and control measures

Species \ Preventive and control measures	Compartmentalisation	Disease notification	General surveillance	Monitoring	Movement control inside the country	Precautions at the borders	Targeted surveillance	4 Number of samples collected	Vaccination prohibited
Farmed fish	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒		☒
Wild fish	☐	☒	☒	☒	☐	☒	☐		☒

The OIE report dated 15 September 2021 detailed:

7. **Note for Farmed fish** (max. 1024 characters) Targeted surveillance interpreted as scheduled, risk-based, physical inspections of farms with diagnostic samples collected as appropriate. Targeted surveillance maintained for HPR deleted, HPR0 would only be detected at diagnostic test. 1 case of HPR0 in semester. **Disease (HPR-deleted) absent, infection (HPR-0) limited.**

Note for Wild fish (max. 1024 characters) HPR deleted only identified in fish in close association with clinical outbreaks in farmed fish. Neither HPR 0 nor HPR deleted detected in reporting semester

<REDACTED – OUT OF SCOPE>

The date of last occurrence of ISA in Scotland was listed in the OIE report in September 2021 from the Scottish Government as 8 May 2012. The Scottish Government previously reported to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in late May 2021 that ISA had not been reported on Scottish salmon farms since 31 December 2009.

It is still not clear, however, how ISA in Scottish salmon is officially reported to the OIE and by whom. Could you please provide specific details on the reporting mechanisms of ISA in Scottish salmon including how, when and to whom the cases in 2021 and any in 2022 were reported to the OIE?

For example, from the information disclosed by the Scottish Government on 2 February 2022 it appears that the Fish Health Inspectorate filled in an official OIE reporting form dated 15 September 2021:

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4. Name of the sender:	<REDACTED – PERSONAL INFORMATION>		5. Position of the sender:		
☒ January - June	☐ July - December	3. Country:	SCOTLAND		

FISH HEALTH INSPECTORATE TECHNICAL MANAGER

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However, from emails disclosed by the Scottish Government on 2 February 2022 it seems that discussions on how to submit the report to the OIE continued well into October 2022:

"Apologies again for providing contradictory information," wrote the Fish Health Inspectorate Technical Manager at Marine Scotland Science in an email to DEFRA dated 25 October 2021 (copied to Charles Allan – head of Marine Scotland's Fish Health Inspectorate). "Will the system permit two selections here? The ISA strain relates to both HPR-deleted strain which we would record as disease absent and HPR-0 strain which would be infection/infestation limited to one or more zones. If only one selection is allowed it would probably have to be the latter – infection/infestation limited to one or more zones."

"The system permits only one presence code per disease, but it allows to provide quantitative data for each ISA genotype to be notified," wrote DEFRA's Animal and Plant Health & Welfare Directorate (Veterinary Trade Facilitation, Global Animal Health) in an undated email (understood to be from October 2021 – Scamon Scotland has asked the Scottish Government to provide the missing information).

Here's an email from DEFRA to the Scottish Government's Marine Laboratory in Aberdeen dated 22 October 2021:

Sorry **<REDACTED - PERSONAL INFORMATION>** but I have another question:

- Infectious salmon anaemia: on Part 1 of your return, Qualitative information, you have selected **"disease absent"** for both farmed and wild fish. However, on Part 2. Quantitative information, you have entered that there was an outbreak in May 2021. So I should change the presence code for farmed fish from **"disease absent"** to one of these two codes:
    - **Disease limited to one or more zones**: The disease is present with clinical signs and limited to one or more zones/compartments (in farmed species or aquatic wildlife)
    - **Infection limited to one or more zones**: Confirmed infection using diagnostic tests, but no clinical signs observed and limited to one or more zones/compartments (in farmed species or aquatic wildlife)

Could you please confirm which code would be most appropriate?

Please also note that another positive case of ISA in Scottish salmon was reported at Landcatch's Ormsary Hatchery following an inspection by the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate on 1 November 2021 – the 'Case Information' for that inspection is still listed as "awaiting publication" (see Excel spreadsheet via List of cases conducted: November 2021).

Case No	Site No	Site Name	Date of Inspection	Case Information	Case Types
2021-0470	FS0090	Ormsary Broodstock Unit	01/11/2021	Awaiting Publication	CNI, DIA, ECI, VMD

The ISA positive result at Landcatch's Ormsary Broodstock Unit in Argyll was disclosed by the Scottish Government via FOI last month (5 January 2022):

> In addition, a further positive result (ISA HPR0) has been obtained from the Ormsary Broodstock Unit operated by Landcatch Natural Selection Ltd - case number 20210470. Case information has not yet been published as this is still in the course of completion. This will be published in due course in line with the Scottish Government publication plan concerning aquatic animal health surveillance, as referenced above. Relevant information to your request is extracted from our records as follows – site visit date - 1 November 2021; one positive result - ISAv Real Time QPCR was obtained and was confirmed as ISAv (HPR0) which is not subject to statutory control measures. The test result related to a pooled sample of three fish.
>
> In both the Loch Spelve and Ormsary Broodstock Unit cases initial movement restrictions were placed on first suspicion and then revoked following the confirmation of the presence of ISA (HPR0), as opposed to the presence of ISAv (HPR-deleted). We have previously explained in significant detail the differences between ISAv – HPR0 and HPR-deleted strains and I would urge that the information provided to you through FoI 202100234467 is carefully considered as context with respect to this FoI response.

Could you please therefore provide specific details on how the ISA positive cases since 1 January 2021 – the Loch Spelve ISA positive at Scottish Sea Farms in May and the ISA positive at Landcatch's Ormsary Hatchery in November as well as any other cases - were reported to DEFRA and the OIE?

Please include emails, letters, Cabinet Briefings and correspondence with Scottish Sea Farms, Landcatch/Hendrix and any other parties in relation to the reporting of ISA in Scottish salmon.

Presumably there are emails with Scottish Sea Farms and Landcatch and perhaps Salmon Scotland (formerly the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation) discussing the ISA positives in Scottish salmon. Please include that correspondence and any other information relating to the reporting of ISA in Scottish salmon since 1 January 2021.

The Scottish Government's FOI disclosure on 2 February 2022 also detailed an OIE report apparently submitted by the Fish Health Inspectorate to the OIE (or perhaps submitted online via DEFRA) for the second semester of 2020 dated 27 May 2021:

Another [OIE report filed by the Scottish Government and/or DEFRA on 27 May 2021] – relating to the second semester of 2020 (July to December) – detailed five samples of farmed fish collected for ISA testing and 2 samples of wild fish:

SIX-MONTHLY REPORT ON THE NOTIFICATION OF OIE-LISTED AQUATIC ANIMAL DISEASES AND INFECTIONS

1. **Report date:**	27/05/2021	2. **Reporting period:**	**Year**	2020	**Semester**
4. **Name of the sender:**	<REDACTED – PERSONAL INFORMATION>		5. **Position of the sender:**		
☐ January - June	☒ July - December	3. **Country:**	SCOTLAND		

FISH HEALTH INSPECTORATE TECHNICAL MANAGER

<REDACTED - OUT OF SCOPE>

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8. **Preventive and control measures**

Preventive and control measures / **Species**	Compartmentalisation	Disease notification	General surveillance	Movement control inside the country	Precautions at the borders	Screening	Stamping out	Targeted surveillance	***Number of samples collected***
Farmed fish	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☒	5
Wild fish	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒	2

As context, the Canadian Government [report locations infected with ISA via the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website] (there are 178 entries):

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Search Inspection.canada.ca

MENU

Canada.ca > Canadian Food Inspection Agency > Animal health > Aquatic animals > Diseases > Reportable diseases > ISA

Locations infected with infectious salmon anaemia

Infectious salmon anaemia is a federally reportable disease. This means that anyone who owns or works with aquatic animals has the legal obligation to notify the CFIA when they suspect or detect an aquatic animal disease that is of concern to Canada.

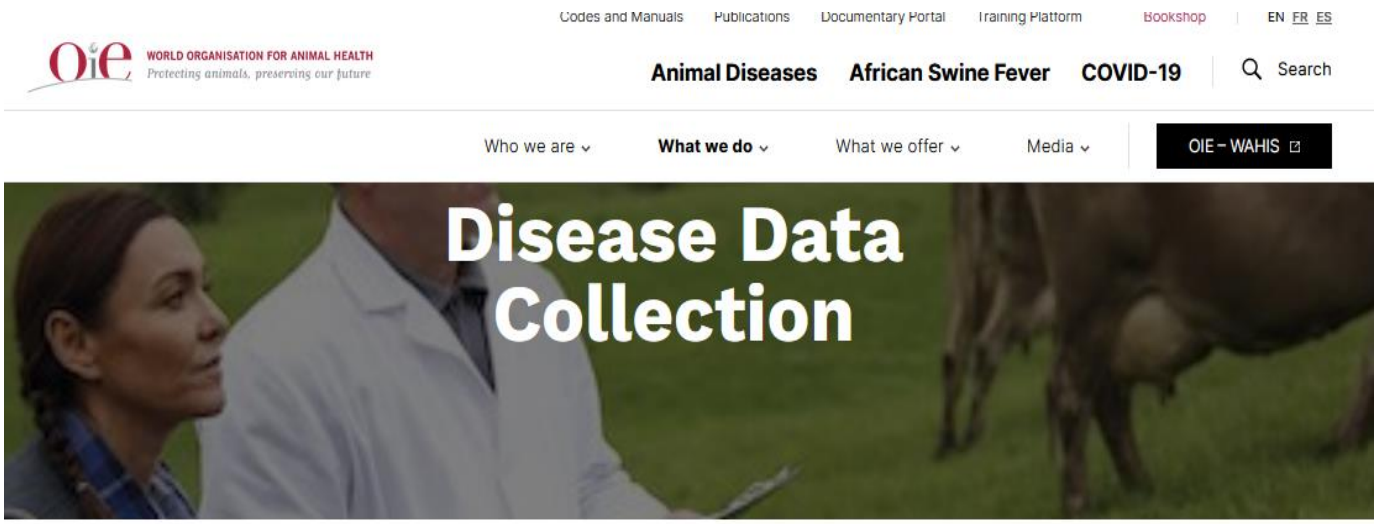
Current as of: 2022-01-31

Locations infected with infectious salmon anaemia

Filter items Showing 1 to 25 of 178 entries | **Show** 25 **entries**

Year	Date confirmed	Location	Animal type infected	Scientific name
2022	January 19	New Brunswick	Atlantic salmon	*Salmo salar*
2021	December 17	New Brunswick	Atlantic salmon	*Salmo salar*
2021	December 10	Newfoundland	Atlantic salmon	*Salmo salar*
2021	December 6 [1]	Prince Edward Island	Atlantic salmon	*Salmo salar*
2021	November 26	New Brunswick	Atlantic salmon	*Salmo salar*

The OIE explain on their web-site:



The new OIE *World Animal Health Information System*, better known as OIE-WAHIS , is an internet-based computer system that processes data on animal diseases in real-time and then informs the international community. Access to this secure site is only available to authorised users, namely the Delegates of OIE Member Countries and their authorised representatives, who use OIE-WAHIS to notify the OIE of relevant animal disease information.

The system consists in two components:

- an early warning system to inform the international community, by means of "alert messages", of relevant epidemiological events that occurred in OIE Member Countries, and
- a monitoring system in order to monitor OIE Listed diseases (presence or absence) over time

The Monitoring system

Six-monthly Reports (terrestrial and aquatic animals) provide information on the presence or absence of diseases on the OIE List and the prevention and control measures applied. In 2009, a new possibility has been added to differentiate, when relevant, between domestic and wild species using different occurrence codes. This change was an important step forward to improve transparency and the knowledge of the animal health situation worldwide in domestic and wild species, without necessarily putting unjustified trade barriers against countries notifying diseases in wild animals only. For diseases reported as being present in a country/territory during a given six-month period, the country/territory in question must provide quantitative data on the number of outbreaks, susceptible animals, cases, deaths, animals destroyed and animals vaccinated. For diseases that are present and are notifiable in the country, the OIE recommends that countries provide quantitative data by month and by first administrative division. Countries/territories that so wish can enter their data in OIE-WAHIS each month during a given six-month period (i.e. without waiting until the end of the six-month period), thereby providing the international community with the most recent information on the diseases that are present and which Member Countries consider are the most important.

In this respect, Member Countries are given other options for entering information in OIE-WAHIS on diseases that are present: by month and for the whole country/territory, by first administrative level and for the entire six-month period, and by first administrative level for the whole country/territory. The choice of one or other of these options will depend on the national surveillance and monitoring systems in the country/territory in question and the type of information generated by these systems. These choices made by Countries and Territories will be reflected in the way the OIE-WAHIS interface is presented whenever a request for information is made.

Scamon Scotland is therefore seeking clarity on reporting of ISA in Scottish salmon to the OIE. It appears from the above posting by the OIE that disease data collection may be via a private internet portal with information not publicly available. However, it is not clear why the Canadian Government publishes ISA locational details but the Scottish and UK Government does not.

Finally, in terms of the farmed salmon and wild fish tested for ISA in 2020 (5 samples of farmed fish and 2 samples of wild fish were reported as collected in the second semester of 2020) and 2021 (4 samples of farmed fish were reported as collected in the first semester of 2021) could you please provide further information.

Please include any test results, photos, locational details, species information and other details relating to the sampling of farmed fish and wild fish for ISA in 2020, 2021 and thus far in 2022.

Please consider this a formal request for information under the relevant FOI and Environmental Information regulations.

Please provide the information electronically.

Please provide a receipt for this FOI request.

Yours sincerely,

Don Staniford

Director, Scamon Scotland

Cc: World Organization for Animal Health (OIE): oie@oie.int