

SCOTTISH SALMON WATCH



WELFARE

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5 February 2020

RSPCA Assured Welfare Abuse on Salmon Farms

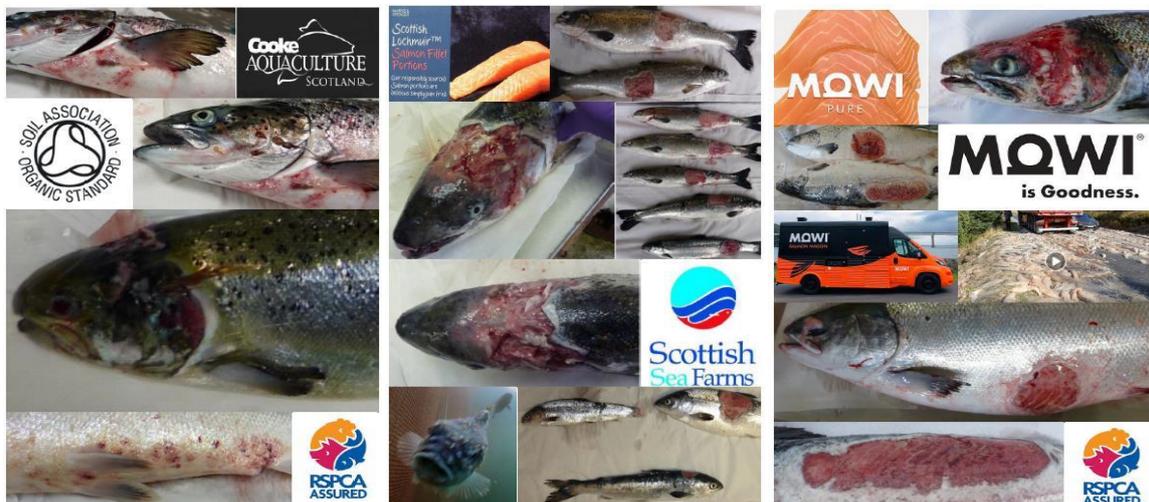
Scottish Salmon Watch would like to brief the RSPCA's [executive team](#), [Board of Trustees](#), [ambassadors](#) as well as [patrons, vice-presidents and celebrity supporters](#) on the systemic welfare abuse on RSPCA Assured salmon farms in Scotland. The message is a simple one - stop certifying 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!



Scottish Salmon Watch do not think that the RSPCA's [founding members Arthur Broome and Sir William Wilberforce](#) (not to mention Her Majesty the Queen as [royal patron of the RSPCA](#)) would be so proud of the [current state of salmon farming in Scotland](#) as to award it the RSPCA Assured stamp of approval.



It is understood that RSPCA Assured certifies ca. 70% of salmon farming production in Scotland - including all [Mowi \(formerly Marine Harvest\)](#), [Scottish Sea Farms](#) and [Cooke Aquaculture](#) salmon farms.



Scottish Salmon Watch believes that RSPCA Assured's rhetoric of "respect" and "compassion" is not matched by the reality of welfare problems endemic on salmon farms across Scotland.

With over 3,000 members and backed by the UK government, RSPCA Assured is world-renown for its vision that all farm animals have a good life and are treated with compassion and respect. Its strict animal welfare standards across a host of farmed species cover the entire life of the animal from the health and diet to their environment and care. This includes things like space, light, bedding, transport and humane slaughter.



Setting the standard

RSPCA Assured are at forefront of developing and improving health and welfare standards for farmed fish, with aims to certify 90% of UK farmed fish over the next two years.

Benchmark's aquaculture health team – led by Pete Southgate – worked closely with the RSPCA, representatives from the salmon industry and fish welfare groups to develop the Welfare Standards for Farmed Atlantic Salmon.

Over 70% of Scottish salmon is now farmed to the RSPCA's standards and more salmon farmers throughout the UK are working to this standard than in any other farming sector.

"We've clearly shown that farming to RSPCA welfare standards makes good business – as well as good welfare – sense. Healthier fish and better bio-security means lower mortality, and therefore increased salmon production." Bob Waller,



John Avizienius, left, and Malcolm Johnstone wanted the chance to speak at Holyrood's salmon inquiries. Photo: FFE

Does this look like an example of "good welfare" to you ([download photo dossier in full online here](#))?

[Mowi's Tabaigh salmon farm in Loch Erisort](#) (12 November 2019)



Please note that the RSPCA have consistently refused to supply a list of which salmon farms are certified via RSPCA Assured but [Mowi](#), [Scottish Sea Farms](#) and [Cooke](#) have both publicly stated that their farms are RSPCA Assured. However, [photographic evidence](#) and ['Case Information' published by the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate](#) offers precious little reassurance.

Does the RSPCA seriously endorse such systemic suffering of salmon?

[Mowi's Port Na Cro salmon farm in Shuna Sound](#) (23 October 2019)



[Mowi's Poll Na Gille salmon farm in the Sound of Jura](#) (19 September 2019)



[Mowi's Rum salmon farm off the Isle of Rum](#) (9 July 2019)



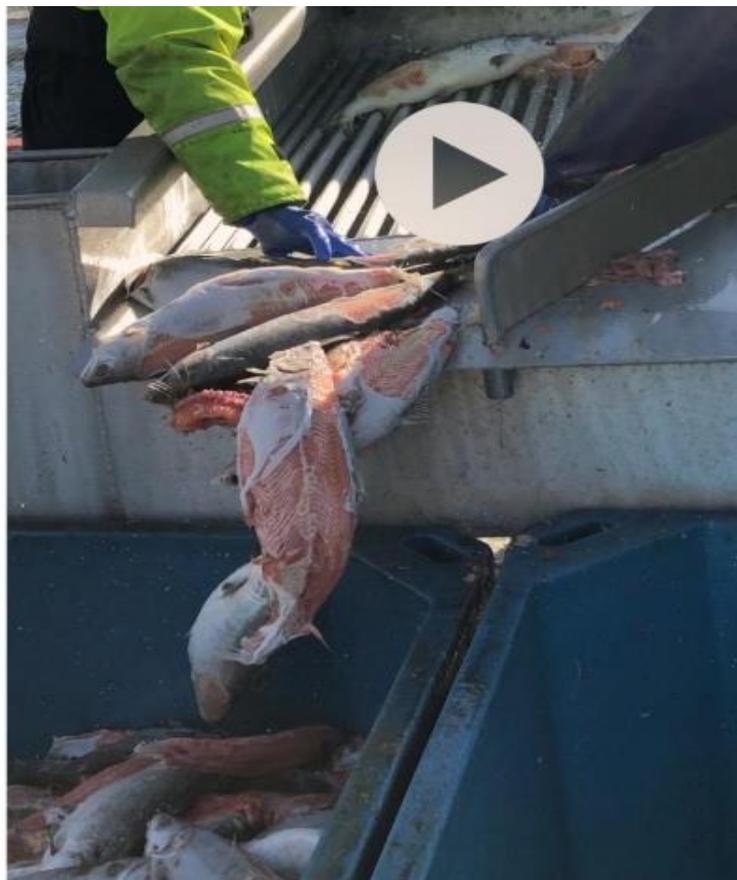
[Mowi's Kingairloch salmon farm in Loch Linnhe](#) (30 April 2019)



[Mowi's Stulaigh salmon farm in Loch Eynort](#) (5 June 2018)



[Mowi's Carradale salmon farm in Kilbrannan Sound](#) (March 2018)



[Mowi's Groatay salmon farm in the Sound of Harris \(2018\)](#)



[Mowi's Grey Horse Channel salmon farm in the Sound of Harris \(2018\)](#)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Kishorn B salmon farm in Loch Kishorn \(2017\)](#)



[Mowi's Sron salmon farm in Loch Alsh \(2017\)](#)



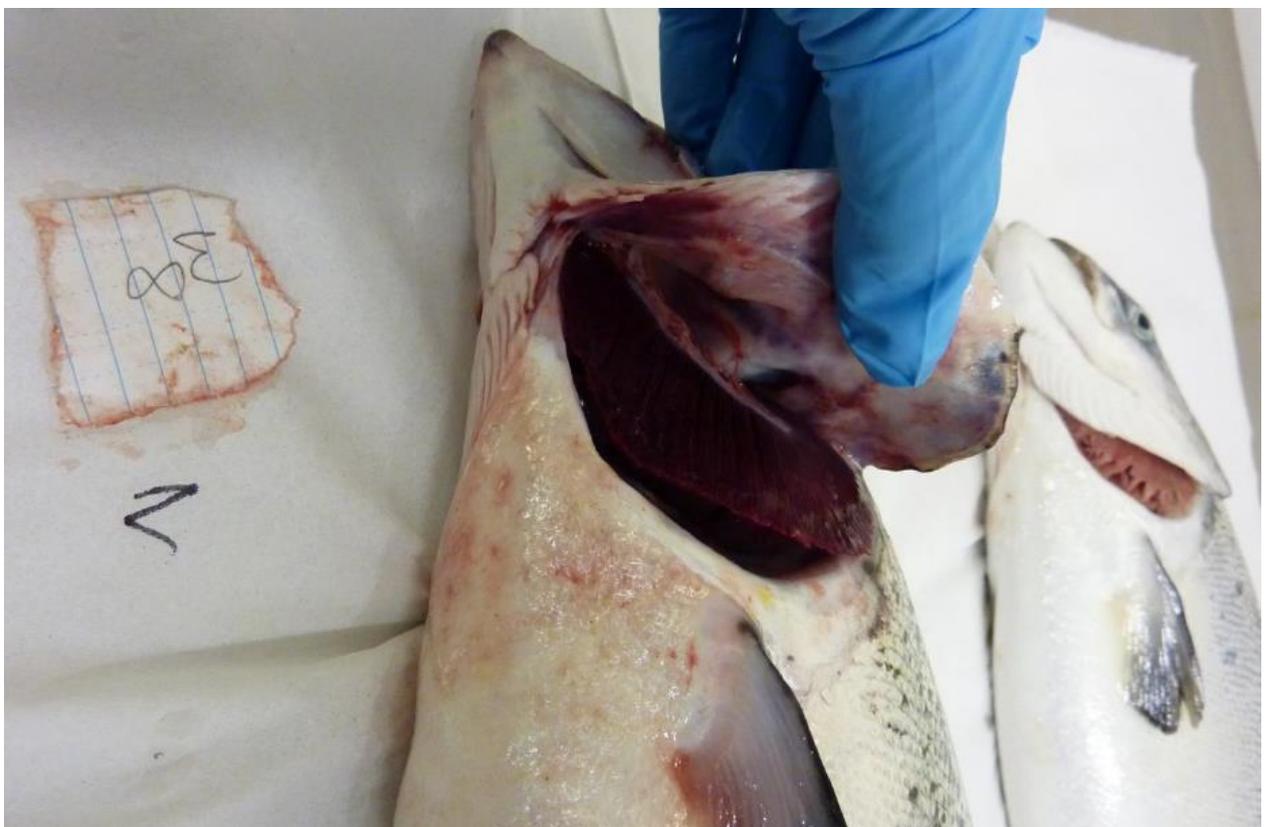
[Mowi's North Shore salmon farm in Loch Erisort \(2017\)](#)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Kishorn A salmon farm in Loch Kishorn](#) (2017)



[Cooke Aquaculture's Winna Ness salmon farm in Uyea Sound \(2017\)](#)



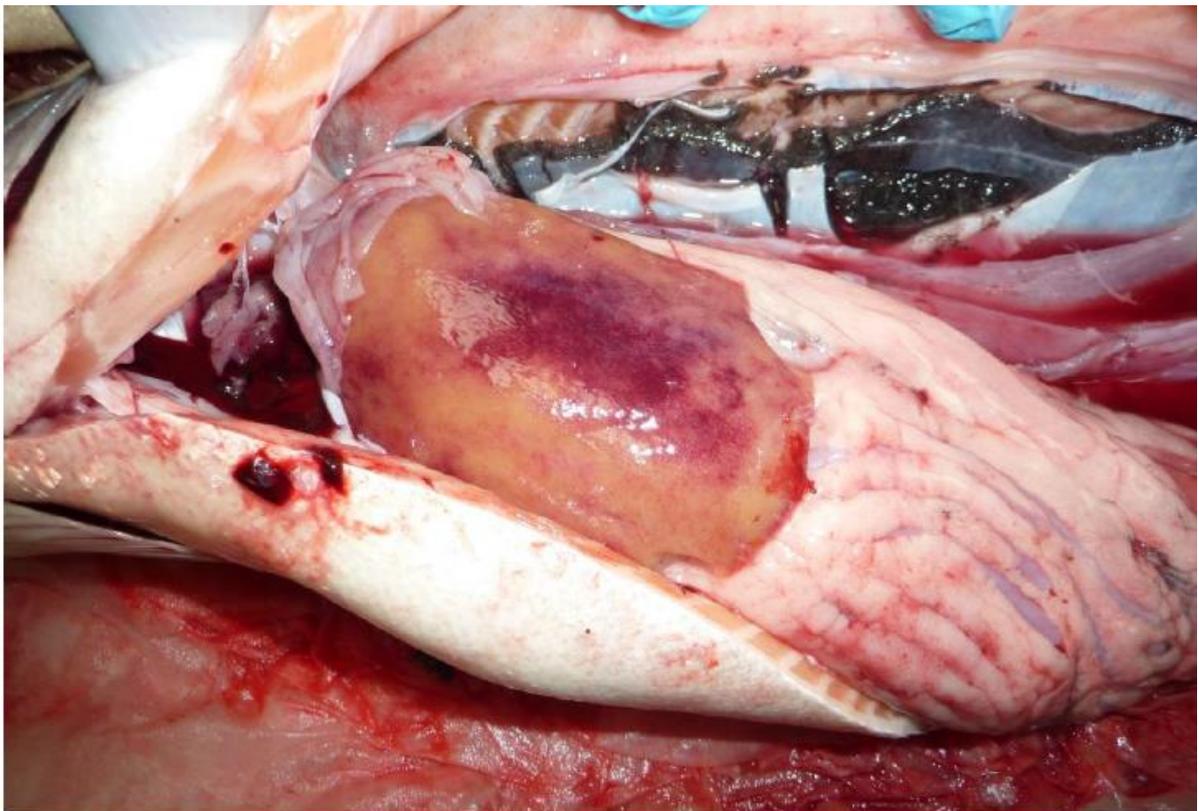
[Cooke Aquaculture's Kirkabister salmon farm in Basta Voe \(2016\)](#)



F2 Haemorrhaging



[Cooke Aquaculture's Djuba Wick salmon farm in Colgrave Sound \(2016\)](#)

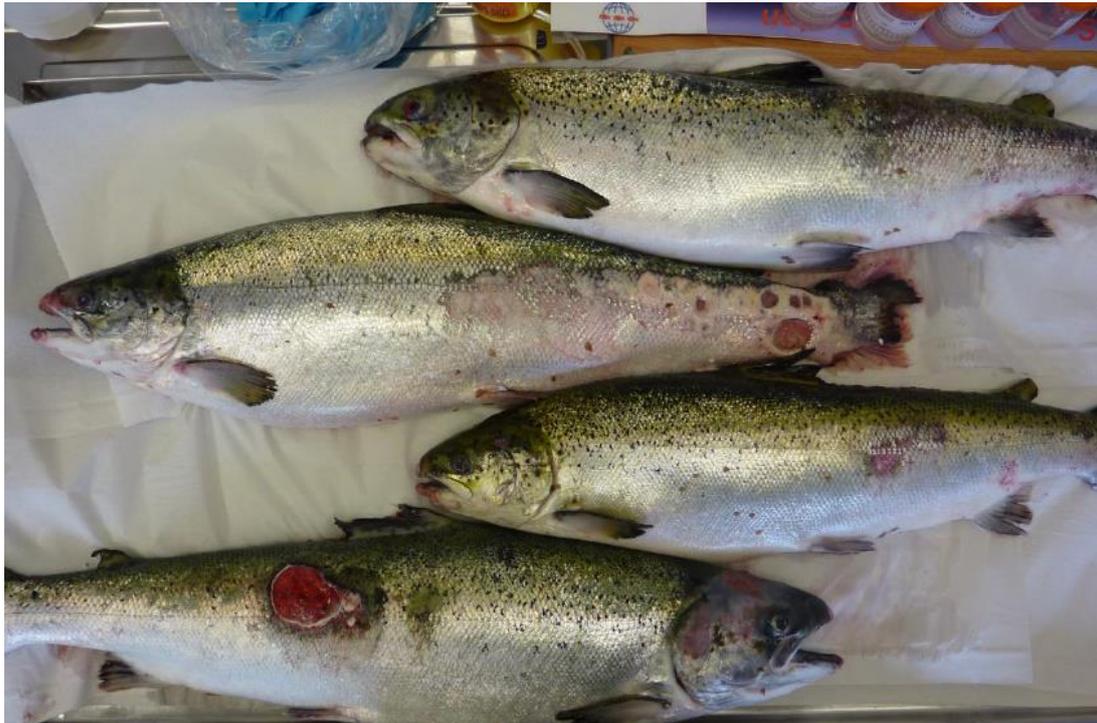


Fish 2 – Haemorrhaging on liver

[Cooke Aquaculture's Meil Bay salmon farm in Orkney](#) (2016)



[Mowi's Ardintoul salmon farm in Loch Alsh \(2016\)](#)



[Mowi's Scotasay salmon farm, Isle of Harris \(2016\)](#)



[Mowi's Scotasay salmon farm in East Loch Tarbert \(2nd inspection\)](#) (2016)



[Mowi's Raineach salmon farm in East Loch Tarbert \(2016\)](#)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Kishorn B salmon farm in Loch Kishorn](#) (2015)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Nevis B salmon farm in Loch Nevis](#) (2015)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Kishorn B salmon farm in Loch Kishorn \(2nd inspection\) \(2015\)](#)



[Mowi's Ardmaddy salmon farm in Seil Sound \(2015\)](#)

2015-0336



[Mowi's Ardmaddy salmon farm in Seil Sound \(2nd inspection\) \(2015\)](#)



F5 close up of lesion

[Scottish Sea Farms' Loch Arienas salmon farm in Highland region](#) (2014)



[Scottish Sea Farms' Crooie salmon farm in Clift Sound](#) (2013)



Read more via [Photo Dossier of Diseased, Deformed & Abused Scottish Salmon](#). The Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate publishes 'Case Information' on a monthly basis [online here](#) (2013-2019 data is archived [online here](#)). [Photos have been made available via Freedom of Information - despite legal threats by salmon farming companies](#) - back only to 2013.

Does the RSPCA's [executive team](#), [Board of Trustees](#), [ambassadors](#) and [patrons, vice-presidents and celebrity supporters](#) seriously think the RSPCA Assured farmed salmon showcased above have enjoyed the 'Five Freedoms' as detailed in the "[RSPCA Welfare Standards for Farmed Atlantic Salmon](#)" (February 2018)?

The standards are based upon the 'Five Freedoms' as defined by FAWC. Although these 'freedoms' define ideal states, they provide a comprehensive framework for the assessment of animal welfare on-farm, in transit and at the place of slaughter/killing, as well as representing an important element of farm assurance requirements. These 'Five Freedoms' are relevant to fish welfare and should be considered in relation to husbandry practice. These 'Freedoms' are shown in bold below, and the wording has been adapted with supporting text to reflect how they relate to fish welfare.

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- **Freedom from discomfort**
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- **Freedom from pain, injury or disease**
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- **Freedom to express normal behaviour**
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- **Freedom from fear and distress**
by ensuring conditions and care which avoid mental suffering.

Fish welfare expert [Dr. Lynne Sneddon of the University of Liverpool](#) certainly does not [think so](#).

NEWS | SCOTTISH NEWS



Sneddon: fish are suffering

"These fish are obviously damaged so they will be in pain and quite frankly this would not be acceptable in pig, sheep or cow farms. 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. So really these fish should be removed at the first sign of illness and humanely killed to safeguard their welfare."

"The fish here have a lot of lesions, ulcers, damage due to sea lice, eye damage. Really, these fish should never have been allowed to get to this stage. The minute they show signs of illness they should be removed and humanely killed. It would suggest that these animals have been allowed to persist and suffer for a long time. The skin of the fish is covered in nociceptive nerves which detect potentially painful stimuli so the damage caused by these sea lice will be painful. And it also leaves the fish open to secondary infections from other pathogens so it is highly likely that the body will be invaded by other diseases."

When asked whether farmed salmon in such a state should be certified via [RSPCA Assured](#) (as is the case for ca. 70% of Scottish salmon farming production), [Dr. Sneddon replied](#):

"Well, I've never ever been an RSPCA certifier. Personally, in my own opinion as a scientist, 'no' is the answer. I would not say this is a welfare friendly practice."



The disconnect between the [photographic evidence of welfare abuse at RSPCA Assured salmon farms](#) and the marketing of RSPCA Assured salmon raises serious questions.



Sainsbury's salmon fillets with the RSPCA Assured logo, which is now recognised by more than half of shoppers. Photo: RSPCA Assured.

For example, when RSPCA Assured inspectors visit salmon farms how thorough are the annual inspections? Do inspectors use video surveillance to check on the welfare of the farmed salmon swimming in the cages or dead at the bottom of the nets? Do inspectors visit towards the end of the harvest cycle when welfare problems are at their worst? Are RSPCA Assured inspections independently audited? Are inspections unannounced?



Malcolm Johnstone, aquaculture manager for RSPCA Assured, checks out a farm. Photo: RSPCA Assured.

The damning [photographic evidence](#) and [video surveillance](#) seriously undermines the RSPCA's support for salmon farming. Here's [video footage of the dead salmon at the bottom of a RSPCA Assured salmon farm operated by Mowi](#) (watch more via [BBC Panorama's 'Salmon Farming Exposed'](#) broadcast in May 2019).



The [RSPCA's web-site claims](#) that the RSPCA standards "ensure the fish are healthier and less stressed".



Where to buy ▾ Farm animal welfare ▾ Recipes ▾ News ▾ Seasonals ▾ Take action ▾ 🔍

Key farmed fish welfare problems and how RSPCA Assured helps

Home > Farm animal welfare > **Salmon and trout** 1 of 2 pages

Water quality, handling procedures, stocking density, and the way fish are transported and slaughtered can have a big impact on their welfare.

It can be stressful for farmed fish when they're handled and removed from water when they're being vaccinated or graded according to their size.

What makes RSPCA Assured different?

The RSPCA welfare standards for salmon and trout - which must be met for fish to be labelled RSPCA Assured - ensure the fish are healthier and less stressed.

The standards require good water quality and careful handling procedures which ensure the health and welfare of the fish.



The RSPCA welfare standards cover all aspects of the fish's lives, including health, diet, environment, care and handling.

RSPCA Assured assessors and the RSPCA's farm livestock officers check that the RSPCA welfare standards are being met.

The RSPCA Assured label makes it easy to recognise products from animals that have had a better life.

Potential farmed fish welfare issues:

- Poor environment, handling, diet, health, transport and slaughter

RSPCA welfare standards are designed to ensure fish are healthier and less stressed

Do these RSPCA Assured salmon [farmed by Mowi in Loch Linnhe](#) look "healthier and less stressed" ([the fact is that ca. 20-25% of farmed salmon die a horrible death each year](#))?



Does this 'cleaner fish' ([filmed inside an RSPCA Assured salmon farm operated by Scottish Sea Farms on the Isle of Mull in August 2018](#)) look healthy to you ([the fact is that hundreds of thousands of wrasse and lumpsuckers die each year on salmon farms in Scotland](#))?



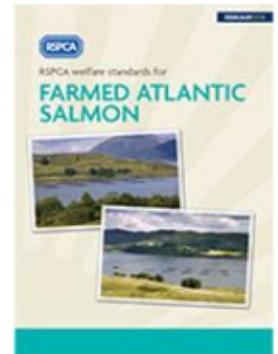
It is alarming to [read on the RSPCA's web-site](#) that "there are currently no plans to publish a revised version of the standards".

RSPCA welfare standards for farmed Atlantic salmon

Our detailed RSPCA welfare standards have been developed to represent good practice in the care and welfare of commercially-farmed Atlantic salmon at all stages of their lives.

Please download the [RSPCA welfare standards for farmed Atlantic salmon \(PDF 2.56MB\)](#).

You can also [read the standards online](#).



Next planned revision of the standards

There are currently no plans to publish a revised version of the standards.

Has the RSPCA not read the [recent scientific evidence published in the December 2019 issue of Veterinary & Animal Science](#) detailing welfare problems due to the operation of the Thermolicer (used on salmon farms to kill lice parasites)?



Veterinary and Animal Science
Volume 8, December 2019, 100081



Thermal injuries in Atlantic salmon in a pilot laboratory trial

Kristine Gismervik ^{a, b}, Siri K. Gåsnes ^{a, b}, Jinni Gu ^{a, b}, Lars H. Stien ^{b, c}, Angelico Madaro ^{b, c}, Jonatan Nilsson ^{b, c}

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Abstract

Thermal delousing is a new method for removing sea lice from farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar* L.). We investigated thermally-related tissue injuries in Atlantic salmon in a pilot laboratory trial to describe the acute effect of high water temperatures (34–38 °C). Acute tissue injuries in gills, eyes, brain and possible also nasal cavity and thymus were seen in salmon exposed to water temperatures of 34–38 °C in 72 to 140 s. This implies that exposing salmon to such water temperatures is a welfare risk, not only due to the direct tissue injuries that may also be dependent on exposure time, but also due to risk of thermal pain and aversion, including flight reactions.



Veterinary and Animal Science
Volume 8, December 2019, 100076



Sudden exposure to warm water causes instant behavioural responses indicative of nociception or pain in Atlantic salmon

Jonatan Nilsson ^{a, b, c}, Lena Moltumyr ^a, Angelico Madaro ^a, Tore Sigmund Kristiansen ^a, Siri Kristine Gåsnes ^b, Cecilie Marie Mejdell ^b, Kristine Gismervik ^b, Lars Helge Stien ^a

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Abstract

Thermal treatment has become the most used delousing method in salmonid aquaculture. However, concerns have been raised about it being painful for the fish. We studied the behavioural response of Atlantic salmon acclimated to 8°C when transferred to temperatures in the range 0–38°C. Exposure time was 5 min or until they reached the endpoint of losing equilibrium and laying on their side, a sign of imminent death. At temperatures below 28°C, none of the fish reached endpoint within the 5-min maximum. At 28°C four of five fish reached endpoint, and fish reached endpoint more rapidly as temperature increased further. Fish transferred to temperatures above 28°C had higher swimming speed immediately after transfer and maintained a high swimming speed until just before loss of equilibrium. Their behaviour was from the start characterised by collisions into tank walls and head shaking. Just before loss of equilibrium they started breaking the surface of the water, swimming in a circle pattern and in some instances displayed a side-wise bending of their body. In other words, salmon transferred to temperatures above 28°C showed instant behavioural responses indicative of nociception or pain.

RSPCA representatives and ambassadors may wish to read more details via [The Sunday Times](#) (2 February 2020):

Sun 2 Feb 80

THE SUNDAY TIMES NEWS SCOTTISH NEWS

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 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".

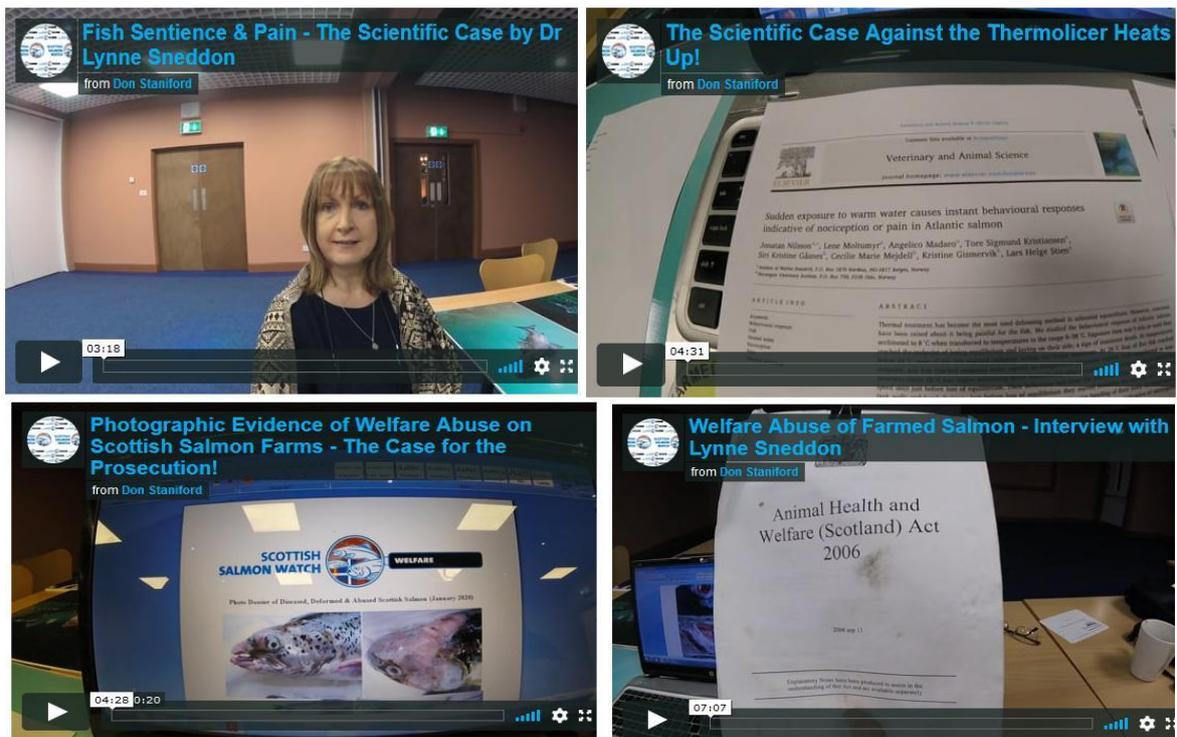
In 2018, Kristin Ottesen of Norwegian firm HaVet linked head injuries in fish with being exposed to heated water for 30 seconds.

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



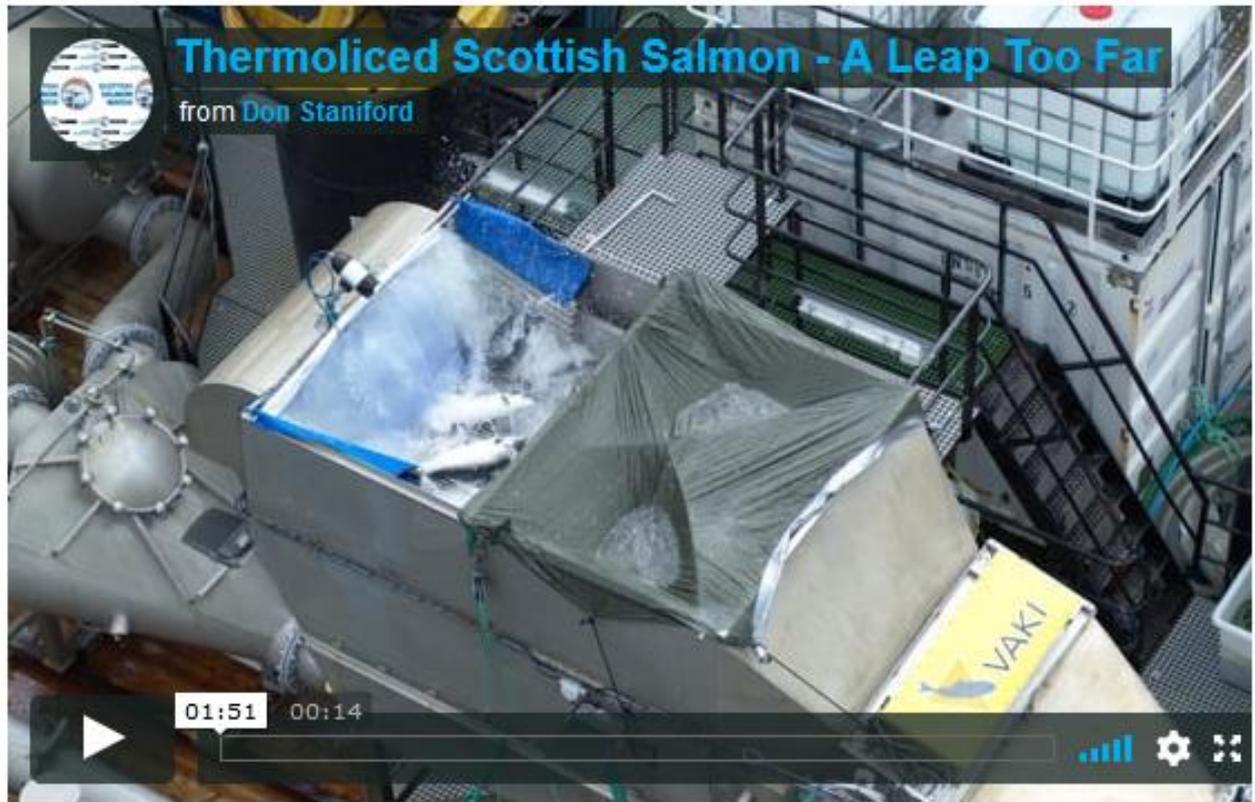
Marine Harvest's salmon farm off the Isle of Muck. The industry is worth £2bn a year to Scotland
JAMES GLOSSOP

More context to the welfare abuse on salmon farms is available via [video interviews with fish welfare expert Dr. Lynne Sneddon of the University of Liverpool](#):



The image shows four video thumbnails arranged in a 2x2 grid, all attributed to Don Staniford. Each thumbnail features a circular logo in the top left corner and a play button in the bottom left corner. The top-left thumbnail shows Dr. Lynne Sneddon speaking, with the title "Fish Sentience & Pain - The Scientific Case by Dr Lynne Sneddon" and a duration of 03:18. The top-right thumbnail shows a document titled "The Scientific Case Against the Thermolicer Heats Up!" with a duration of 04:31. The bottom-left thumbnail shows a presentation slide titled "Photographic Evidence of Welfare Abuse on Scottish Salmon Farms - The Case for the Prosecution!" with a duration of 04:28. The bottom-right thumbnail shows a document titled "Welfare Abuse of Farmed Salmon - Interview with Lynne Sneddon" with a duration of 07:07.

Video footage of a Thermolicer in operation at an RSPCA Assured salmon farm operated by Mowi in Loch Leven is available [online here](#)



Video footage of thermal injuries due to heat also accompany the [scientific papers published in December 2019 in Veterinary & Animal Science.](#)



Perhaps the reason why RSPCA Assured (and Freedom Food before it) has given welfare assurance to ca. 70% of salmon farming production in Scotland is a financial vested interest?



We understand from a [report published by Salmon & Trout Conservation Scotland in 2017](#) that RSPCA Assured rakes in between £800,000 and £900,000 per annum in revenue from the certification of salmon farms in Scotland.



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The report - "[RSPCA Assured certification of Scottish farmed salmon](#)" - included:

RSPCA Assured charges for certification

- 4.1 In the year to December 2015, Freedom Food Limited made £2.4m, with assurance scheme licence fees and assessments amounting to £2.0 million. Freedom Food Limited's annual report states that 233 million fish benefitted from the scheme in 2015, as against 283 million in 2014⁹. Its expenditure in 2015 was also given as £2.4 million.
- 4.2 67% of Scottish farmed salmon are said to be covered by the RSPCA Assured scheme¹⁰. In 2012, a higher figure of 78% of Scottish salmon was claimed to be farmed to the RSPCA's higher welfare standards¹¹.
- 4.3 It is also important to note that all certified fish farms are charged to be RSPCA Assured. Freedom Food Limited charges a £119 for new membership of the RSPCA Assured scheme, a £486 annual fee per fish farm site and a charge of 0.875p per kg of the value of product sold (gutted weight).
- 4.4 Based upon annual Scottish salmon production figures given in the Scottish Fish Farm Production Survey 2015¹² of 171,722 tonnes in 2015, from 250 seawater sites, these charges imply a total charge levied upon Scottish salmon farming of between £800,000 and £900,000 per year.



Don Staniford
@TheGAAIA

Replying to @NevisMacdui @SundayTimesScot and 12 others

All above the table and on display in RSPCA Assured (formerly Freedom Food) company accounts - close to £1 million in 2020? [@SalmonTroutCons tinyurl.com/yicsbxh9u](https://www.tinyurl.com/yicsbxh9u)

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3:07 AM · Feb 2, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

In addition to a financial interest, RSPCA Assured has a conflict of interest in terms of former salmon farming staff now employed by RSPCA Assured.

Former Marine Harvest veteran joins RSPCA to tackle aquaculture welfare

Animal welfare group appoints two new members.

12 April 2016 13:08 GMT UPDATED 13 April 2016 8:23 GMT
By IntraFish Media

The RSPCA appointed two new members on Tuesday to help improve the welfare of fish farmed in the UK.

RELATED NEWS

Video: RSPCA-certified salmon highlighted in new TV campaign

News
4 September 2015 13:07 GMT

RSPCA-certified salmon, trout will bear new label

News
24 June 2015 13:08 GMT



Ian Michie - RSPCA

Former Marine Harvest veteran Ian Michie joined the RSPCA as a farm livestock officer and will carry out inspections of RSPCA Assured farmed fish producers in Scotland. He will also visit laying hen farms in the country.

Caring for our fish



For this month's edition of The Scoop we caught up with Malcolm Johnstone, the Aquaculture Scheme Manager for RSPCA Assured. Malcolm has been with the RSPCA for 11 years and told us more about his role, the RSPCA Assured scheme and his relationship with Marine Harvest.

"RSPCA Assured is the RSPCA's farmed animal welfare scheme, and we assess farms against welfare standards set out by the RSPCA. We do this for a number of species, including farmed Atlantic salmon, and we are the only assurance scheme that is focused solely on farmed animal welfare. Our standards cover the whole animal life cycle - from hatching to harvest.

"The RSPCA standards for both seawater and freshwater fish cover every aspect of fish farming including: manager and stock-keeper training, inspection, permissible medical products and feed, the control of sea lice, husbandry, fish-handling, grading, protection from other animals, equipment, the management of escapees, environmental impact and transportation (including well-boats).

"As Aquaculture Scheme Manager, I oversee our three Scotland-based assessors who together ensure that all of our member fish farms are assessed annually. These assessments take place on a rolling basis and take at least half a day, though often longer, especially for some of the bigger sites such as recirculation units.

"During our inspections, we review paperwork, inspect infrastructure - particularly the pens, physically check the fish to ensure they are healthy, and speak to managers and staff on-site. We really take a close look at everything to ensure that good welfare is in place and that the site meets all criteria to be certified as RSPCA

Assured. The RSPCA is a prestigious and respected charity and we take our role of upholding its mission to protect animals from cruelty very seriously. Should we find any evidence to suggest that a site is not conforming with the welfare standards then the site manager or person who is representing the site is briefed and we give them one month to take action to address this.

"I am very pleased to say that all of Marine Harvest's fish farms in Scotland are members of the RSPCA Assured scheme.

"We know that as new technologies emerge and welfare-science advances, best practice naturally evolves, so the RSPCA reviews its standards on a regular basis. As a result, new standards are published every two-to-three years. They are updated in consultation with scientists, environmental experts and our own members. The current standards for farmed Atlantic salmon were updated in February this year and one of the key changes is that the standards now cover cleaner fish which are widely used to control sea lice amongst farmed salmon in Scotland. The welfare of these fish is just as important as farmed salmon and trout.

"As part of the Assured scheme, companies that meet our standards, such as Marine Harvest, are able to display our logo on their products, demonstrating to both retailers and consumers that they take fish welfare seriously."

To find out more about the RSPCA Assured scheme, please visit <https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/farm-animal-welfare/salmon-and-trout/>



Malcolm Johnstone

The close working relationship between RSPCA and Marine Harvest (re-named Mowi in 2019 due to negative consumer perception in the name Marine Harvest) raises alarm bells.

RSPCA honour for Marine Harvest veteran Bracken



Steve Bracken, left, receives his award from RSPCA Assured aquaculture manager Malcolm Johnstone. Photo: Abrightside Photography

 **Don Staniford**
@TheGAAIA

RSPCA honour for Marine Harvest bit.ly/2L5i2O6
Reward for killing over 120 seals since 2011? bit.ly/2pFB8Am
Don't buy RSPCA Assured Scottish salmon bit.ly/2IV0I7Y
@MHScotland @RSPCA_official
@RSPCA_PATeam @salmonfarming1

Seal Killing Salmon Farms (2011-2017)					
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
	12	14	15	33	33
ny	7	2	11	14	14
safood)	1			7	32
	13	26	20	7	5
	15	12	9	13	11
		1	7	6	4
			3	4	4
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		2	2	4	3
	1	8	3		
			2		1
			1		
	49	65	73	92	119



10:22 AM · May 18, 2018 · Twitter Web Client

In fact, the [composition of the RSPCA Salmon Standards Technical Groups](#) reads like a who's who of salmon farming companies and fails to include representation by NGOs and independent scientific experts on fish welfare.

RSPCA farmed salmon standards technical advisory groups

Members of the RSPCA Salmon (Freshwater) Standards Technical Advisory Group (**FW**) and RSPCA Salmon (Seawater) Standards Technical Advisory Group (**SW**) are selected on the basis of the specific expertise they bring to the groups in different areas of farmed salmon care. Members include:

- Professor James Turnbull of University of Stirling and the Chair of the Advisory Group
- John Avizienius (RSPCA farmed salmon specialist) **FW and SW**
- Andy Young (Cooke Aquaculture) **FW and SW**
- Chris Findlay (Fish Vet Group) **FW and SW**
- Dave Danson (Landcatch) **FW**
- David Roadknight (Lochduart) **FW**
- George Whyte (Kintail Hatchery) **FW**
- Gilpin Bradley (Wester Ross Salmon) **FW and SW**
- Grant Cumming (Hjaltland Seafarms Ltd) **SW**
- Hugh Murray (Migdale Smolt Ltd) **FW**
- Hugh Richards (Wester Ross Salmon) **FW and SW**
- Ian Armstrong (Partners in Welfare) **FW and SW**
- John Richmond (Marine Harvest Scotland) **FW**
- Jon Walden (Hjaltland Seafarms Ltd) **FW**
- Michelle Johnson (Cooke Aquaculture) **FW and SW**
- Nick Joy (Lochduart) **FW and SW**
- Paul ArmstrongWilson (Solway Transport) **FW**
- Paul Irving (Meridian Salmon) **FW**
- Rob Murray (Howietoun) **FW**
- A technical/field operations representative of Freedom Food Ltd **FW and SW**
- A representative of RSPCA field staff (Farm Livestock Officers) who monitor Freedom Food scheme members **FW and SW**

The RSPCA has previously attracted controversy over its support for the killing of seals at RSPCA Assured salmon farms. The Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture [reported in 2018](#):

Around 70% of Scottish salmon farming production is currently certified via RSPCA Assured generating [an estimated income of close to £1 million](#) per year for the RSPCA [3] - with Marine Harvest (Scotland's largest salmon farming operator [producing 50,000 tonnes of farmed salmon in 2015 from 49 sea farms](#)) accounting for an estimated £400,000 per year [4].



According to [documents obtained by GAAIA via FOI](#), salmon farms certified by RSPCA Assured ([branded as Freedom Food until 2015/2016](#)) accounted for almost 70% of the seals shot by salmon farms in 2014 (an increase from 26% in 2011 before falling to 52% in 2015) [7]. Based on [the fact that all of Marine Harvest's salmon farms are certified via RSPCA Assured](#) at least a third of all seals killed by salmon farms during 2016 and 2017 (data for the first two quarters is only available) were at RSPCA Assured salmon farms.



In December 2015, GAAIA protested outside Buckingham Palace and delivered [a letter to Her Majesty the Queen](#) (as [royal patron of the RSPCA](#)) asking her to intervene to end the slaughter of seals on RSPCA Assured salmon farms in Scotland.



GAAIA also wrote to the RSPCA asking that Marine Harvest and other salmon farming companies slaughtering seals are suspended immediately from the [RSPCA Assured/Freedom Food certification scheme](#).



Here's extracts from the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture's [letter to RSPCA Assured/Freedom Food in 2015](#) asking for a public commitment to end the inhumane practice of killing seals.

RSPCA Assured/Freedom Food
Wilberforce Way
Southwater
Horsham
West Sussex
RH13 9RS

Email: hello@rspcaassured.org.uk and clive.brazier@freedomfood.co.uk

30 August 2015

Public Pledge to Stop Certifying Seal-Killing Salmon Farms

Further to previous correspondence on the issue of seal-killing at salmon farms (see enclosed Appendix 2), could you please make a public commitment to end the inhumane practice of killing seals at RSPCA Assured/Freedom Food certified salmon farms?

Your stance in support of killing seals at salmon farms in Scotland seems completely out of kilter with the RSPCA's mandate of animal welfare. Why does the RSPCA rescue seals in Norfolk, [for example](#), when it is sponsoring their slaughter in Scotland?



And isn't it hypocritical in the extreme for the RSPCA to use [cute images of seals to raise money and raise your public profile](#) when you are promoting the killing of seals at salmon farms in Scotland?



Perhaps the RSPCA Board of Directors and management team at RSPCA Assured need a reminder of the real sordid story on seals?

Here's photos of dead seals killed near Marine Harvest's salmon farm in Loch Alsh:



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Staniford calls on RSPCA to drop Marine Harvest, Scottish Sea Farms, SSC

By Undercurrent News Dec. 29, 2015 10:07 GMT



A ————— A      Comment

Anti-salmon farming activist Don Staniford is calling on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to drop Marine Harvest, Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) and the Scottish Salmon Company (SSC) from its “RSPCA Assured” scheme.

The RSPCA Assured scheme, formerly known as “Freedom Food”, permits the shooting of seals as a “last resort”, as does the Soil Association and the Aquaculture Stewardship Council certification.

“The RSPCA, who certify over 70% of Scottish farmed salmon as ‘welfare friendly’, must now tighten the net on salmon farms who shoot seals first rather than as a ‘last resort,’” said Staniford, director of the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture.

“Bullets are clearly cheaper than anti-predator nets but companies such as Grieg [Seafood] have shown that seal-friendly salmon is attainable quickly and painlessly,” he said.

Marine Harvest, SSF and SSC are “still killing seals across Scotland during 2015”, he said.

As a result, they “must surely be expelled from the RSPCA Assured scheme”, said the activist.

“Until all salmon farms install anti-predator nets and seal blinds, consumers should boycott all Scottish salmon,” he said.

Sadly, in 2020 the [RSPCA stills sanctions the killing of seals via RSPCA Assured salmon farms.](#)



Where to buy ▾ Farm animal welfare ▾ Recipes ▾ News ▾ Seasonals ▾ Take action ▾ 

Seals and RSPCA Assured salmon farms

Home 1 of 2 pages

We share people's concerns about seal shooting on salmon farms - we have long been concerned about this and believe that one seal death is one too many. Our current standards only permit shooting as an absolute last resort, and in exceptional circumstances to prevent fish suffering, but we want to go further.

We would like to see zero shooting of seals on all RSPCA Assured salmon farms by 2020 and we are working hard to achieve this.

We regularly review our standards and compliance procedures and where necessary they have been strengthened, refined and clarified to make sure members do everything they possibly can to deter a seal attack.

To help achieve our aim, we have commissioned research to examine why a small minority of farms suffer repeated seal attacks while the vast majority have none.

This will help the whole industry understand how they can better protect their fish from injury and death without resorting to shooting.

Further information

No one wants seals to be shot, least of all the RSPCA, but neither do we want hundreds or thousands of salmon - which can feel pain and suffer distress - to suffer and die in a seal attack. It's a real dilemma but we would like to see zero shooting of seals on all RSPCA Assured salmon farms by 2020 and we are working hard to determine how we can achieve this

The RSPCA is concerned equally about the welfare of all animals whether they be farmed salmon or wild animals such as seals, which may prey upon them. The RSPCA is the biggest rehabilitator of seals in England and Wales. All members of the RSPCA Assured scheme

must record and demonstrate that rigorous measures are taken at all times to deter predator attacks on their salmon. These measures must - in accordance with RSPCA standards - focus on physical exclusion, including the proper use of acoustic devices (where suitable for use*) properly tensioned and weighted nets and the efficient removal of dead and moribund fish from the bottom of the nets

However, it is a sad reality of salmon farming - as it is with predator attacks on terrestrial livestock farming (for example, foxes attacking free-range hens) - that from time to time a determined predator may be able to bypass all efforts to exclude them and attack the fish. Such attacks can cause serious welfare problems with potentially hundreds, or even thousands, of fish being killed and/or caused great suffering. In these cases, it may be



Where to buy ▾ Farm animal welfare ▾ Recipes

Seals and RSPCA Assured salmon farms

Home

necessary to shoot the predator, which must be undertaken by a suitably trained and competent person. This method of control must only be undertaken as a last resort, which is a requirement of both the RSPCA welfare standards and of the Marine Scotland licence conditions

RSPCA Assured scheme members must report any incidents of seals being shot to the scheme within 72 hours. Such reports are then fully investigated.

If a member of the RSPCA Assured scheme cannot demonstrate that any lethal action was taken only as a last resort and that all required non-lethal deterrents were in place and fully functional, then the member will automatically be suspended from the scheme

The shooting of one seal is still one too many and we have commissioned research to

examine why some farms suffer repeated seal attacks while others have none. This will help the whole industry understand how they can better protect their stocks without resorting to shooting.

*Some sites cannot have an acoustic deterrent on site due to wild populations of cetaceans

RSPCA Assured salmon farming companies [lead the way in the killing of seals](#) - with Marine Harvest (re-named Mowi on 1 January 2019), Cooke Aquaculture, Scottish Sea Farms and Loch Duart slaughtering grey and common seals at RSPCA Assured salmon farms across Scotland during 2019 [according to official statistics published by the Scottish Government](#).

2019 Returns	Licence No:	Licence Name:	Site (date)	Quarter 1		Site (date)	Quarter 2		Site (date)	Quarter 3	
				Grey	Common		Grey	Common		Grey	Common
	ONC10/2019/W	Cooke Aquaculture Scotland		0	0		0	0	Pegal Bay (02/08)	1	0
	S01/2019/W	Cooke Aquaculture Scotland		0	0		0	0	Bow of Hascosay (05/09)	1	0
	S08/2019/W	Scottish Sea Farms Ltd	Teisti Geo (05/03) Holms Geo (05/04)	2	0		0	0	Vidlin North (03/09, 27/09)	2	0
	WI08/2019/W	The Scottish Salmon Company	Vuia Mor (06/04) Vuia Mor (06/04)	2	0	Vuia Mor (02/07) Vuia Mor (11/07) Vuia Mor (11/07)	3	0	Kyles Vuia (23/08, 23/08) - Grey Vuia Mor (01/09, 03/09) - Grey Vuia Mor (05/09) - Common	4	1
	WI11/2019/W	Loch Duart Ltd		0	0	Sound of Harris (27/07)	1	0	Sound of Harris (12/08, 09/09)	2	0
			Tabhaigh (18/02) - grey Tabhaigh (19/02) - grey North Shore (15/03) - com North Shore (16/03) - com North Shore (15/03) - grey North Shore (17/03) - com								
	WI14/2019/W	Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd		3	3	North Shore (07/06)	0	1			0
	WS06/2019/W	Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd	BDNC (11/03)	0	1		0	0			0
	WS08/2019/W	The Scottish Salmon Company		0	0	Portree Outer (01/05)	1	0			0
	WS13/2019/W	Scottish Sea Farms Ltd		0	0		0	0	Fiunary (09/10) Kishorn West (12/10)	0	2
	WS16/2019/W	Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd		0	0		0	0	Isle Ewe (04/09)	1	0
	WS21/2019/W	Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd	Ardintoul (06/02) - grey Sconser (05/03) - grey Maol Ban (11/03) - com Muck (26/03) - grey	3	1	Ardintoul (05/06) Greshornish (09/06)	2	0	Greshornish (01/10) Colonsay (18/10) Muck (30/10)	0	3



The RSPCA's certification of farmed salmon via Freedom Food and RSPCA Assured has also been [long criticised in terms of pollution and lice infestation](#).



Freedom Foods 'failing to crack down' on poor salmon farming standards

Salmon and Trout Association said farms under the RSPCA's scheme had records of sea lice infestation and pollution

Severin Carrell

@severincarrell

Wed 16 Jan 2013 18:11 GMT



19



▲ The Salmon and Trout Association said a number of farms accredited under the animal welfare scheme had proven records of high levels of seabed pollution and sea lice infestation. Photograph: Murdo Macleod

The RSPCA's **Freedom Food** labelling scheme has been accused by anglers of failing to crack down on poor environmental standards at Scottish salmon farms.

"Freedom Food seems to be blind to the dismal environmental record of some of the farms certified," said Guy Linley-Adams, a solicitor who wrote the [S&TA report](#).

He said the main motivation for companies was simply as promotional tool: to persuade consumers their products observed the highest welfare and environmental standards, but the products were no better than the minimal legal and industry standards.

He said the Freedom Foods' salmon advisory panel was dominated by the fish farming industry: of its 19 members, 15 came from from the industry's largest fish farm companies or directly related industries such as fish transport firms.

Freedom Foods told the Guardian its members accounted for 70% of Scottish salmon farm output, which exceeded 150,000 tonnes in 2011, and covered 224 sites within 17 production companies and groups, including hatcheries and fresh water fish farms. But she insisted the charity had suspended members in the past.

"We take a tough approach to compliance which means that on rare occasions we do suspend members for failing to meet the standards. You will appreciate that I can't give you details of those members for data protection reasons," she said.

A damning report - '[Fish Welfare on Scotland's Salmon Farms](#)' - published by OneKind in 2018 [named and shamed RSPCA Assured Marine Harvest \(since re-named Mowi\) as operating the worst salmon farms in Scotland](#) (Cooke featured in the list too along with [RSPCA Assured Loch Duart](#)).

The 12 fish farms rated the worst for animal welfare

Fish farm	Company	Negative welfare score
Poll na Gille, Argyll	Marine Harvest	11
MacLeans Nose, Kilchoan, Highland	Marine Harvest	9
Bagh dail nan Cean, Argyll	Marine Harvest	9
Vuiabeag, Isle of Lewis	The Scottish Salmon Company	9
Badcall Bay, Sutherland	Loch Duart	8
Loch Carnan, South Uist	Loch Duart	8
Inch Kenneth, Argyll	The Scottish Salmon Company	8
Basta Ness, Shetland	Cooke Aquaculture	6
Cloudin, Shetland	Cooke Aquaculture	6
North Havra, Shetland	Grieg Seafoods Shetland	6
Calva Bay, Sutherland	Loch Duart	6
Loch a Chairn Bhain, Highland	Loch Duart	6

Source: OneKind

OneKind said that fish were suffering and called on salmon farmers to “urgently up their game”. The fish farming industry said in response the report failed to accurately reflect the efforts farms take to ensure good animal welfare.



Supermarkets sell farmed salmon as a healthy food and they market products as responsibly sourced. Some packaging carries the “[RSPCA Assured](#)” logo.

In 2019, [the Ferret and Sunday National](#) further showcased Mowi's welfare abuse at salmon farms certified as welfare-friendly via RSPCA Assured.



Mowi has [disclosed](#) that its Bagh Dail nan Ceann salmon farm in Loch Shuna north east of the island of Jura was visited recently by APHA inspectors. In a letter in September 2019, APHA told the company that it had failed to take “adequate actions” between 10 July and 12 August to ensure the welfare of lumpfish.

“Not taking effective decision at earlier date has prolonged the period while the lumpfish still at the site have been in need to be protected from suffering and disease,” APHA said.

Lumpfish are used by fish farmers to eat the lice that can infest caged salmon and damage them. Dead lumpfish at Bagh Dail nan Ceann – which some say translates as ‘Bay of the Dead Heads’ – [were filmed](#) on 2 July by the anti-fish farming campaigner, Don Staniford, who then filed a complaint to APHA.



Scottish Salmon Watch would like to request a meeting with RSPCA officials next month in Edinburgh when the RSPCA host a ['Focus on Fish'](#) workshop.

Focus on Fish



23rd March 2020

The University of Edinburgh

What are the aims of this meeting and who should attend?

This meeting aims to bring together those involved in the care, use and regulation of fish in research and testing to explore the topic of the welfare of fish used in scientific research. In particular, this meeting will focus on efforts to reduce suffering, with an emphasis on general refinements, welfare assessment, and humane endpoints. Delegates will be able to share experience and expertise and will take away practical recommendations and action points for applying refinements.





Don Staniford
@TheGAAIA

Replying to @RSPCA_LabAnimal and @EdinburghUni

Please ask your colleagues @rspcaassured to refine their humane endpoints for farmed salmon. Surely this level of cruelty & abuse (on farms certified by RSPCA Assured) must come to an end? tinyurl.com/y6xtwmza
@onekindtweet @ciwf @HSIUkorg @PETAUK
@MowiScotlandLtd @APHAgovuk



Photos: Scottish salmon from Mow's Staligh Island farm in Loch Eynort

1:13 PM · Jan 24, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Hopefully we will not have to protest outside the meeting.



Search



Petition to RSPCA - End your support for the killing of Scottish seals!

How the RSPCA has any sort of mandate or authority to operate in Scotland is unclear. The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has itself been [hijacked by the salmon farming industry with the Chair of the SSPCA a fish veterinarian with Scottish Sea Farms](#) (a company with an [appalling track record on welfare](#) and [featured by the BBC's One Show in 2017 in relation to mass mortalities and disease problems](#)).

fishfarmingexpert

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Fish vet appointed chair of Scottish SPCA



Ronnie Soutar becomes the first fish vet to be appointed chair of the Scottish SPCA. Photo: SSF

Scottish Sea Farms' head of veterinary services, Ronnie Soutar, has become the first fish vet to be appointed chairperson of animal welfare charity the Scottish SPCA.

'Huge honour'

He said: "To be elected chairperson of the Scottish SPCA is a huge honour. The charity provides a lifeline service to vulnerable animals the length and breadth of Scotland – domestic, farm and wildlife – all of which is only made possible through charitable donations. I look forward to playing my part in ensuring those donations are put to the very best use, helping the Society achieve its core purpose of improving animal welfare in Scotland."

Soutar previously served as a Scottish SPCA board member from 2013 then vice-chairperson from 2015.

Scottish SPCA chief executive Kirsteen Campbell said: "Everyone at the Scottish SPCA is delighted to welcome Ronnie as our new chairperson. While serving as a board member for the past five years, Ronnie's expert animal welfare knowledge, business acumen and strategic thinking has been of real benefit to our team. We look forward to continuing to work together to help animals and people across Scotland."



Kirsteen Campbell: "Delighted".

The unpaid role is expected to be for four years, during which time Soutar will continue both his role at Scottish Sea Farms and in small animal practice management.

The SSPCA, like the RSPCA, has been lambasted for condoning welfare abuse on salmon farms.



Don Staniford, from [Scottish Salmon Watch](#), accused SSPCA of having a “clear conflict of interest”. Ronnie Soutar, the head of veterinary services for another fish farm company, [Scottish Sea Farms](#), has [recently been appointed](#) as chairperson of SSPCA.

“It’s like a fox being placed in charge of the investigation of who killed all the chickens. It makes you wonder what level of welfare abuse has to be recorded to trigger a prosecution in Scotland,” Staniford said.

“If The Scottish Salmon Company is not found guilty of a breach of the [Animal Health & Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) in the case of Loch Roag then the law clearly needs to be changed. To restore any kind of consumer confidence in Scottish salmon, an independent review of welfare on Scottish salmon farms must be carried out as a matter of urgency.”

The Lewis footage was shot by Corin Smith, a [photographer](#) and [fly fishing guide](#). “The SSPCA now as a matter of urgency need to reveal the details of their investigation,” he said.

“Given the level of public concern and shock, not to mention condemnation in the strongest terms from within the salmon farming industry, it will severely undermine the credibility of the SSPCA if they are not completely transparent about how they have reached this surprising decision to close the case so quickly.”

Smith has made [all his footage available online](#). “I think it is essential for the credibility of the SSPCA, and the Scottish salmon farming industry, that as soon as possible the public have the opportunity to scrutinise the details of this case and the SSPCA’s decision making process,” he added.

“Frankly if the SSPCA is saying that hundreds of tonnes of dead salmon and thousands of fish in an appalling state of health is business as usual, that is a shocking indictment on the reality of farmed Scottish salmon.”



On 3 September 2018 The Ferret [published video footage](#) shot underwater inside a cage at Vacasay fish farm, showing hundreds of sea lice feeding on salmon with open wounds, damaged tails and fins.

The video prompted investigations by the Scottish Government's [Fish Health Inspectorate \(FHI\)](#), the UK government's [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#) and the [Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(SSPCA\)](#).

FHI [issued the farm](#) with an "advisory letter" requesting a review of the measures to control lice. The APHA concluded that "appropriate measures" were in place, and the [SSPCA said](#) that "all measures possible" had been taken to ensure fish welfare.

But an anti-fish farming campaigner, [Corin Smith](#), who shot the video footage, is publishing a 72-page report entitled '[An Autopsy Of An All Clear](#)'.



Even if the RSPCA has a legitimate jurisdiction in Scotland, it is clear that the RSPCA's mandate via RSPCA Assured ([re-branded away from Freedom Foods in 2015](#)) is "to prevent cruelty to animals by the promotion of humane farming". Documents [published online via Companies House in relation to Freedom Food Limited](#) includes the latest annual report for 2018 ([published online in July 2019](#)):

Company Registration No. 02723670
Registered Charity in England & Wales No. 1059879
Registered Charity in Scotland No. SC038199

FREEDOM FOOD LIMITED

Directors' and Trustees' Report and Accounts

31 December 2018

DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES

Mr M Tomlinson (resigned November 2018)
Mr P Baxter
Ms J Tredgett (Vice Chairman)
Mr T Vaughan (resigned December 2018)
Mr R Baylis
Mr D Main
Mr W Hamilton (Chairman)
Mrs M Crawley (Appointed on 5th June 2018)

REGISTERED OFFICE

Wilberforce Way
Southwater
Horsham
West Sussex
RH13 9RS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mr C Brazier

FREEDOM FOOD LIMITED

DIRECTORS' AND TRUSTEES' REPORT

The directors and trustees of Freedom Food Limited present their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

OBJECTS OF THE COMPANY

Freedom Food Limited is a subsidiary charitable company of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The primary object of the company is to prevent cruelty to animals by the promotion of humane farming, transportation, transfer and slaughter of farm animals by implementing a set of rearing and handling standards approved from time to time by the RSPCA. Further, the company seeks to promote consumer preference for produce from livestock producers that conform to the RSPCA Welfare standards for farmed animals by identifying as many products as possible with a unique trademark and encouraging retailers to market these products. There have been no major changes to these activities during the year.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Freedom Food Limited is a private company limited by shares (registered number 02723670) and the RSPCA is the sole member. The company is also a charity registered by the Charity Commission in England and Wales (registered number 1059879) and in Scotland (SC038199). It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association, the contents of which have been approved by the governing Council of the RSPCA. The company was first incorporated in 1992 and began trading in 1994 and is in the beneficial ownership of the RSPCA. The company became a charity in December 1996 and has charitable tax status with HMRC.

THE DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES AND THEIR INTERESTS

There are generally eight directors. Since Freedom Food Limited is also a charitable company, the directors are also trustees of the charity. The Memorandum requires that the trustees of the parent organisation, the RSPCA, nominate four of their number, as directors of Freedom Food Limited. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council are given first option on two Board places. The remaining three directors have been appointed to the Board of Directors of the company because of their particular experience and are non executive Directors, there is currently one vacancy. During 2018 there was one month when there were only three RSPCA trustees who were directors, and as at the date the accounts were signed on the 21st March 2019, only three RSPCA trustees who were directors.

And how can the certification of salmon farms - [earning RSPCA Assured close to one million pounds per annum](#) - be seriously viewed as benefitting the public?

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In considering public benefit the directors and trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission. It is not enough that Freedom Food Limited's work benefits animals. Richard Martin, one of the RSPCA's nineteenth century founders, identified the Society's prime aim as being to alter the moral feelings of the country. He recognised that taking care of animals is an essential part of any civilisation. This still resonates today. Preventing cruelty to animals promotes humane sentiments in humankind towards animals which involves moral benefit to the human community as a whole. Whilst this public benefit is clear, it is difficult to quantify and must be balanced against any detriment.

The Results and Activities section of this report demonstrate the achievements and performance of Freedom Food Limited and the benefit provided to the public. All our charitable activities focus on promoting kindness and preventing or suppressing cruelty to animals and are undertaken to further these charitable purposes for the public benefit.

RSPCA SUPPORT

Freedom Food Limited is not dependent on the services of volunteers in accomplishing its work, although RSPCA branch volunteers support the promotion of the scheme at a local level. Freedom Food Limited and RSPCA staff also work closely in managing the most effective implementation of the RSPCA's objectives for farm animals. The RSPCA donates the services of it's farm livestock officers provided to Freedom Food Limited.

Strangely, [it appears that there is no person listed at Companies House as legally responsible for the operation of Freedom Foods Limited \(RSPCA Assured\)](#):

FREEDOM FOOD LIMITED

Company number **02723670**

Follow this company

File for this company

Overview

Filing history

People

Charges

View all

Officers

Persons with significant control

0 active persons with significant control / 1 active statement

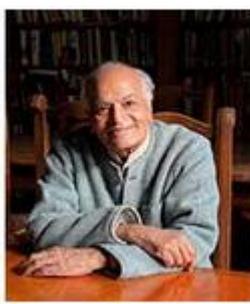
Statement **ACTIVE**

The company knows or has reasonable cause to believe that there is no registrable person or registrable relevant legal entity in relation to the company

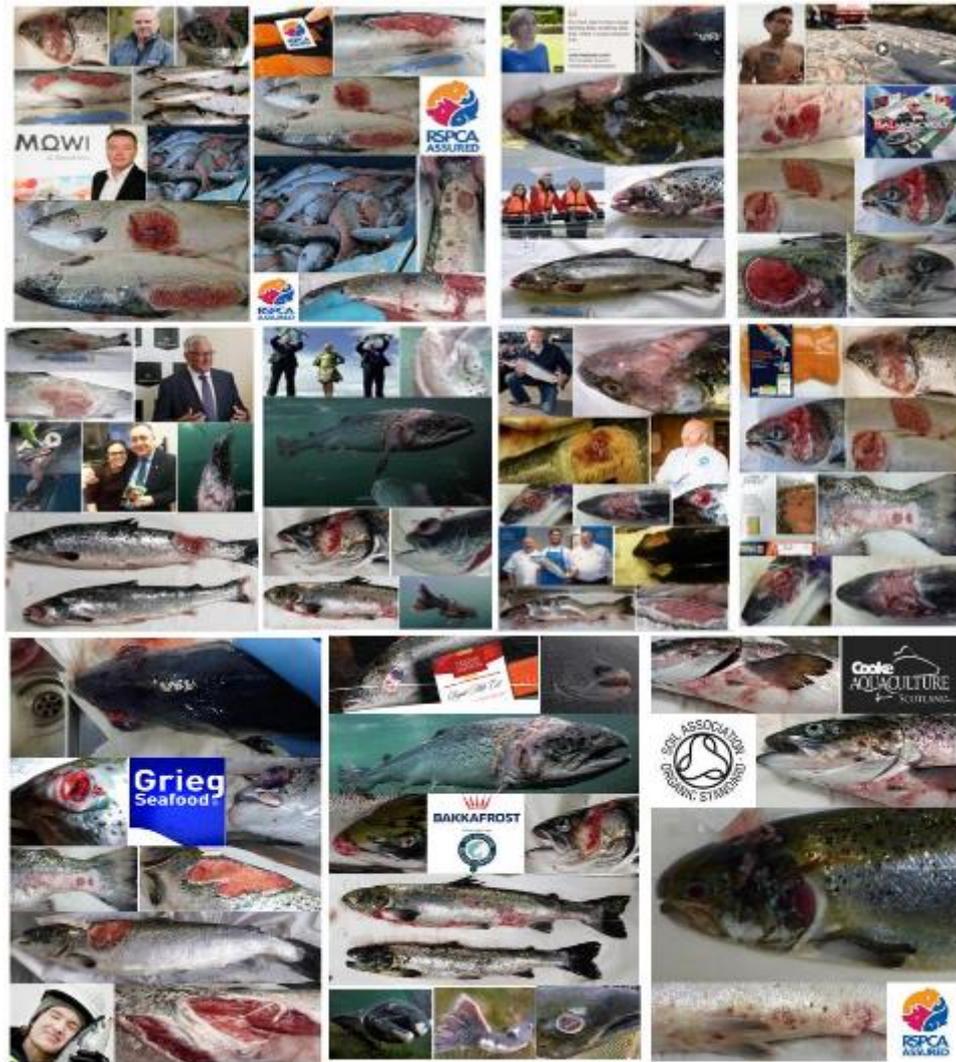
Notified on

31 May 2017

Who at the RSPCA is willing to step forward to publicly support the certification of factory salmon farms via RSPCA Assured?



Who at the RSPCA is willing to be the [face of Scottish salmon](#)?



Did the [RSPCA's ambassadors](#) really sign up to condone the [suffering of salmon](#) via RSPCA Assured?



If the [RSPCA's Board of Trustees](#) seriously wished to "end the cruelty that animals suffer" (as stated in the [RSPCA's mission](#)) then surely they would [send in inspectors to investigate animal cruelty and neglect](#) on salmon farms rather than certify cruelty via RSPCA Assured?



Scottish Salmon Watch [believes that RSPCA Assured salmon farms are systematically breaching the Animal Health & Welfare \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) in terms of Section 19 ("[Unnecessary Suffering](#)") and Section 24 ("[Ensuring Welfare of Animals](#)").



Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006

Scottish Salmon Watch asks that you pass this letter onto the RSPCA's [executive team](#), [Board of Trustees](#), [ambassadors](#) as well as [patrons, vice-presidents and celebrity supporters](#) to allow them all to have an input into the decision-making process. Surely common sense dictates that the [RSPCA's principles of preventing cruelty](#) are not sacrificed at the altar of corporate greed and [blind profits for RSPCA Assured](#)?

The [latest filing at Companies House relating to shareholders of Freedom Food Limited lists the RSPCA as the sole shareholder](#):

Statement of Capital (Totals)			
Currency	GBP	Total number of shares	2
		Total aggregate nominal value	2

Full Details of Shareholders

The details below relate to individuals / corporate bodies that were shareholders as at 31/05/2016 or that had ceased to be shareholders since the made up date of the previous Annual Return

A full list of shareholders for the company are shown below

Shareholding 1 : 2 ORDINARY shares held as at the date of this return
Name: ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

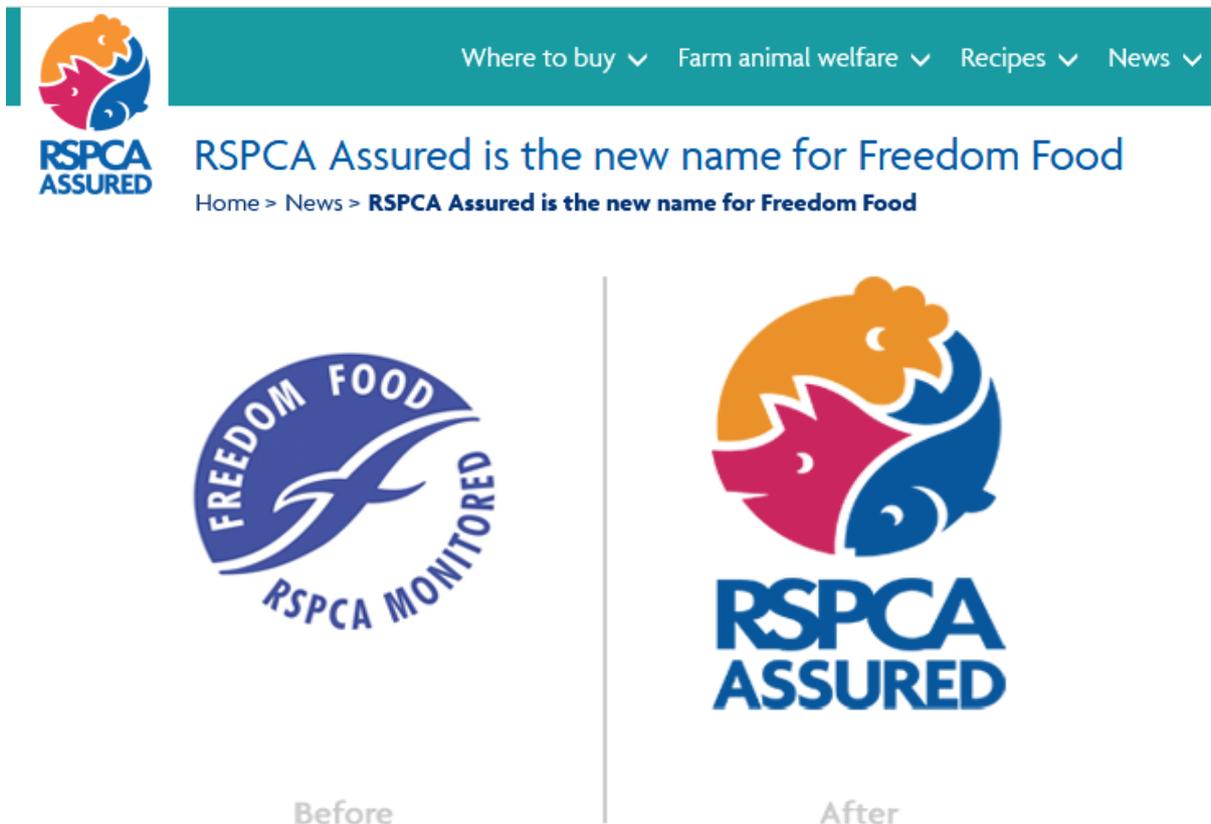
Authorisation

Authenticated

This form was authorised by one of the following:

Director, Secretary, Person Authorised, Charity Commission Receiver and Manager, CIC Manager, Judicial Factor.

Freedom Food and RSPCA Assured appear to be solely controlled by the RSPCA.



The screenshot shows the RSPCA Assured website. At the top, there is a teal navigation bar with the RSPCA Assured logo on the left and menu items: "Where to buy", "Farm animal welfare", "Recipes", and "News". Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads "RSPCA Assured is the new name for Freedom Food". A breadcrumb trail below the heading says "Home > News > RSPCA Assured is the new name for Freedom Food".

Below the text, there are two columns separated by a vertical line, illustrating the logo transition:

- Before:** The Freedom Food logo, which is a circular emblem. The top half is blue with the words "FREEDOM FOOD" in white. The bottom half is white with a blue stylized bird or fish shape. The words "RSPCA MONITORED" are written in blue around the bottom edge of the circle.
- After:** The RSPCA Assured logo, which features a stylized circular emblem with a yellow chicken, a pink pig, and a blue fish. Below the emblem, the words "RSPCA ASSURED" are written in large, bold, blue capital letters.

Scottish Salmon Watch concurs with Ewan Kennedy of [Save Seil Sound](#) that the RSPCA has a case to answer with the [Charity Commission for England and Wales](#) and perhaps also the [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator](#).

 **Ewan Kennedy**
@ewangkennedy

Replying to @TheGAAIA @SundayTimesScot and 12 others

I'm wondering if @ChtyCommission happy about this. @RSPCA_official don't operate in Scotland, what they're doing here is acting as paid PR for an industry that's utterly cruel to animals, shoots seals, poisons lobsters, traps live wrasse, not to speak of what they do to salmon.

11:12 AM · Feb 2, 2020 from Scotland, United Kingdom · Twitter for iPad

 **Don Staniford**
@TheGAAIA

Replying to @ewangkennedy @SundayTimesScot and 13 others

It looks like Freedom Food Ltd (re-branded RSPCA Assured) is the private company but it is a registered charity with RSPCA as the controlling entity tinyurl.com/s63u3kk tinyurl.com/wzrddu9

CONTROLLING ENTITY

ity and controlling entity is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in Great Britain (registered charity number 211146) which is a charity that is dedicated to the prevention of cruelty to animals, at the core of which is the care and protection of the most abused and vulnerable animals. The RSPCA's work includes educational work, enforcing the law, rehoming and rescue work and its related support services are available from The RSPCA, Wilberforce House, 100, Broad Street, Wilberforce, Leicestershire LE15 7JF. For more information visit www.rspca.org.uk

es' Report and Accounts

companies.

11:33 AM · Feb 2, 2020 · Twitter Web App

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).



Scottish farmed salmon is a [welfare nightmare](#) which does not warrant certification by RSPCA Assured. 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.

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Photo: Marina Heston

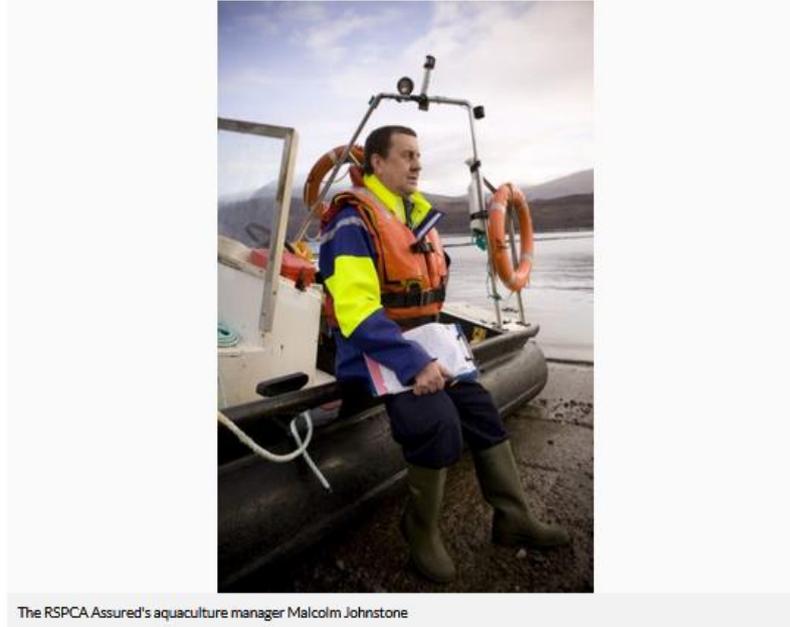
RSPCA ASSURED

Please do not allow [another 25 years of welfare abuse and pollution by Scottish salmon farms](#).

Fish Farmer

Welfare assured as RSPCA scheme marks 25 years

By Editors - 17th October 2019



The RSPCA Assured's aquaculture manager Malcolm Johnstone

THE RSPCA's food label scheme is recognised by more than half of shoppers, the charity revealed as it marked its 25th anniversary.

Georgina Wright, head of UK sales at Mowi, one of the scheme's salmon members, said: 'With the vast majority of Scottish farm raised salmon production operating to the RSPCA's higher welfare standards, RSPCA Assured and all its salmon members really have got something to celebrate.

'But not only has the scheme helped improve the welfare of salmon but so many other farmed animals too.

'For us, ensuring the health and welfare of the fish is at the heart of everything we do. Good welfare makes good business sense, so being a member of RSPCA Assured, the best scheme for animal welfare, is an absolute must.'



I am on 07771 541826 (salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com) if anyone at the RSPCA would like to discuss the issue of salmon farming and RSPCA Assured certification of Scottish salmon.

Yours sincerely,

Don Staniford

Director of Scottish Salmon Watch



For more background please read:

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

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

[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](#)

[Named: supermarkets selling salmon from 'poor' welfare firms](#)

[New report estimates that Scottish salmon farming mortalities are now running at 20 million fish a year despite 2/3rds of the industry being certified as RSPCA Assured](#)

[RSPCA Assured certification of Scottish farmed salmon](#)

[RSPCA Assured Seal Killers!](#)

[Freedom Foods 'failing to crack down' on poor salmon farming standards - Salmon and Trout Association said farms under the RSPCA's scheme had records of sea lice infestation and pollution](#)

