



Mr Don Staniford
c/o salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com

12th October 2020

Dear Mr Staniford

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information dated 29th September 2020 under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs) or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA)

Your request

You asked for information since the 1st January 2019 relating to funding and financial support by salmon farming interests.

As the information you have requested is 'environmental information' for the purposes of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), we are required to deal with your request under those Regulations.

We are applying the exemption at section 39(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA), so that we do not also have to deal with your request under FOISA. This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption.

We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption, because there is no public interest in dealing with the same request under two different regimes. This is essentially a technical point and has no material effect on the outcome of your request.

Information Enclosed

I attach a PDF document containing the information you requested. This relates to MOWI's contribution to the 'Upper Garry Salmon Restoration Project'. Further information is provided below for clarity.

NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

A statutory body responsible for the protection and enhancement of salmon and sea trout populations in the Ness District. Constituted under the 1862 and 1868 Salmon Fisheries Legislation, subsequently amended in the Salmon Act 1986 and the Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001 and more recently amalgamated under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Chairman: Michael Martin
River Director & Clerk: Chris Conroy

email: micmar6@gmail.com
email: ceo@ndsfb.org

Background

The abundance of salmon in the upper River Garry has declined over the last 60 years and is showing little sign of recovery. Counts of adult salmon passing through Garry Dam have reduced from up to 900 fish per year in the 1960's, to a current five-year average of 61 fish. Just 27 fish passed through the counter in 2018, with juvenile salmon densities across much of the system critically low.

Historical stocking undertaken as mitigation for loss of habitat following historical hydroelectric development, together with subsequent easing of fish passage, has proven to be unsuccessful. It is believed that the indigenous population may have been affected by non-native strains of salmon that may not be fully adapted to their environment. Initial baseline genetic monitoring indicated that a remnant of the original native stock of salmon was still present.

In 2012 UHI Inverness College Rivers & Lochs Institute (RLI) was commissioned by the Ness DSFB to carry out a scoping study for the development of a salmon stock restoration programme for the upper River Garry. Their recommendations included the implementation of carefully targeted, designed and linked enhancement initiatives, encompassing habitat improvement and stock rehabilitation through supportive breeding and supplementary stocking.

Rather than looking back and simply blaming each other with no action, Scottish & Southern Energy, the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board, the Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust, MOWI, UHI RLI and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency have come together to collaborate on the delivery of a project to restore a self-sustaining wild salmon population.

The supportive breeding and supplementary stocking element of the project involves capture of a proportion of the wild River Garry salmon smolts as they migrate downstream towards the sea between April and May. These fish are then grown on to maturity in captivity, genetically screened, with their eggs stocked to areas accessible to salmon upstream of Garry Dam for a time limited period in an attempt to 'kick-start' the recovery of a self-sustaining wild population.

Funding and Financial Support by Salmon Farming Interests

As a partner in the Upper Garry Salmon Restoration Project and the operator of Loch Garry Salmon Farm, MOWI has provided the following financial support to the project:

A) Use of Holding Pen on Loch Garry

This 'in kind' contribution relates to the provision of a stand-alone holding pen in Loch Garry. This acts as a temporary holding facility for wild salmon smolts captured as part of this project and ultimately grown on to maturity in captivity at the River Lochy Association's Drimsallie Hatchery. The pen is used between the 1st April and mid-May at a time when the wider site is otherwise empty.

Correspondence relating to this contribution is included in **Appendix A** below.

B) Provision of Health Checks of Broodstock Fish

This 'in kind' contribution relates to the provision of health checks by MOWI fish vets prior to the stocking of eyed ova from the wild broodfish back into the Upper River Garry.

Correspondence relating to this contribution is included in **Appendix B** below.

C) Provision of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)

This 'donation' relates to the provision of a used quad bike worth £3,850 (plus VAT) for use when stocking eyed ova to remote areas of the upper River Garry and monitoring the success of the project. The logistics of planting of eggs in the headwaters of the Kingie in particular had proven to problematic without the appropriate transport.

Correspondence relating to this contribution is included in **Appendix C** below.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your EIRs request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Michael Martin (Chairman, Ness DSFB) via email on micmar6@gmail.com.

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

Yours sincerely,



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