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Testing times for Scottish salmon: Salmon welfare activists step up campaign with Holyrood protests

Campaigners are stepping up protests against the Scottish salmon farming industry with actions in Edinburgh on 2 and 3 September. Protestors will deliver fresh samples of sewage waste effluent discharged by Norwegian-owned Mowi and Scottish Sea Farms to Scottish Ministers.

The effluent samples will be collected by activists this weekend (31 August and 1 September), as part of a 'citizen science' effort organised by industry watchdog Scottish Salmon Watch and crowdfunded by members of consumer group SumOfUs. As part of the action, swimmers, kayakers and rowers in fancy dress [will circle salmon feedlots in the public waters off Oban](#), to protest the environmental damage and welfare abuse caused by Scotland's commercial salmon farms.

Activists will also deliver to Ministers any diseased salmon they find in the public waters over the weekend.

The protests are the latest in a line of activities calling for greater government scrutiny of Scottish salmon farms. [This summer, over 43,000 people backed calls by Scottish Salmon Watch and consumer group SumOfUs](#) for Holyrood to force emergency inspections of salmon farms, due to evidence captured by Scottish Salmon Watch of welfare abuses on a salmon farm in Wester Ross. Last summer, a [report by OneKind exposed welfare problems at salmon farms across Scotland](#).

Don Staniford, Director of Scottish Salmon Watch, said: *"Instead of promoting this dirty rotten industry, Scottish Ministers should be closing down salmon farms. Shocking photographic and video evidence of welfare abuse of Scottish salmon is enough to put people off eating farmed salmon for life. Yet the Scottish Government continues to turn a blind eye and is allowing disease-ridden feedlots to expand with impunity and without proper scrutiny."*

Sondhya Gupta, Campaign Manager at SumOfUs, said: *"Public outcry at the state of Scotland's salmon industry is growing: over 43,000 people backed a SumOfUs petition calling on the Scottish government to force emergency inspections of salmon farms this summer. While they delay, SumOfUs members have stepped up to crowdfund citizen science – but it's time the government take charge. Sampling of salmon farm effluents for infectious diseases, viruses, pathogens and contaminants is urgently required in order to give Scottish salmon a clean bill of health."*

Bob Elliot, Director of OneKind said: *"There's a welfare nightmare playing out on Scotland's salmon farms. Our 2018 report, [Fish Welfare on Scotland's Salmon Farms](#), exposed a number of animal welfare breaches on these farms, including mass mortality, sea lice infestations, disease and the shooting of seals. Two of the farms that the campaigners will be visiting were also listed as #1 and #3 in our [list](#) of the worst salmon farms in Scotland for animal welfare. OneKind calls for a halt to the expansion of the salmon farming industry until it has successfully addressed its animal welfare challenges."*

John Robins of Animal Concern said: *"The proof of the pudding is that salmon farming production in 2018 - the latest data available - is predicted to fall by 21% due to infectious diseases, lice infestation and welfare problems. The evidence we have available via secret filming and photographs disclosed via Freedom of Information suggests systematic breaches of the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 by salmon farms across Scotland. It is now time for the Scottish Government to clamp down on welfare abuse on salmon farms and finally enforce Scotland's welfare laws."*

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Notes to editors:

[1] Edinburgh protests:

- **Monday 2 September:** 11am in Victoria Quay in Leith outside Marine Scotland (1A South Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ).
- **Tuesday 3 September:** 11am in the water fountain outside the Scottish Parliament.

[2] Oban protests:

Saturday 31 August

- 10am: Dunstaffnage salmon farm (Scottish Sea Farms) in the Firth of Lorn (grid reference: [NM86473414](#)). (Meet at Dunstaffnage Marina at 8.30am)
- 2pm: Shuna salmon farm (Scottish Sea Farms) in Loch Linnhe ([NM92544966](#))

Sunday 1 September

10am to 2pm (weather dependent on which sites visited first):

- Bagh Dail nan Ceann salmon farm (Mowi) in the Sound of Jura ([NM77450451](#))
- Poll na Gille salmon farm (Mowi) in the Sound of Jura ([NM77660819](#))
- Rubh an Trilleachain salmon farm (Mowi/Kames) in Shuna Sound ([NM75630742](#))
- Port na Cro (Mowi) in Shuna Sound ([NM76070983](#))

[3] Photos:

High-res photos of Saturday's protest by photographer Lauren Fair will be available online here: <https://www.smugmug.com/gallery/n-cBLs7r/> (password = DON3108)

Scottish Salmon Watch was set up in 2018 to shine a light on the murky waters of salmon farming in Scotland. scottishsalmonwatch.org

SumOfUs is a global movement of consumers, investors, and workers all around the world, united together to hold corporations accountable for their actions and forge a new, sustainable and just path for our global economy. sumofus.org