



Don Staniford
salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com

Our Reference: 202300352198

5 May 2023

Dear Don Staniford,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 April 2023 to Scottish Ministers highlighting your concern of escape events at salmon farms in Scotland. I have been asked to respond.

As articulated in the Bute House Agreement, the Scottish Government believes that Scotland should have an aquaculture industry which is sustainable, diverse, competitive and economically viable, but that it must operate within environmental limits and with social licence and ensure there is a thriving marine ecosystem for future generations.

You will be aware that the Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee, when providing its views and recommendations on the way forward for the sector, was of the view that there was insufficient evidence to support moratorium on new sites and expansion of existing sites. However, the REC Committee recommended in its report 'Salmon Farming in Scotland' that if the industry is to grow it is essential that it addresses and identifies solutions to the environmental and fish health challenges it faces as a priority. We are continuing to make progress on a number of the recommendations of that report, and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands wrote to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee to provide an update on 3 May 2023.

As you note in your letter, work is ongoing to strengthen the escapes regulatory regime and we are exploring how penalties for fish farm escape events could be introduced with a view to redistributing this money to support environmental measures related to wild salmon conservation and research.

We remain committed to publishing a revised [Technical Standard for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture](#) to further improve containment of farmed fish.

In recognition of the number of pressures facing wild salmon, a [Wild Salmon Strategy](#) to catalyse and

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coordinate action was published on 14 January 2022. The Strategy sets out a vision for flourishing populations of wild salmon. It establishes five priority themes for action, including improving the condition of rivers, managing exploitation including the effectiveness of deterrents to poachers, understanding and mitigating pressures salmon face in the marine and coastal environment, international collaboration and developing a modernised policy framework. The Strategy was followed by the [Implementation Plan](#) (IP) in February 2023 which set out in detail over sixty actions that will be taken to achieve this vision over the next five years.

A Delivery Group of stakeholders has now been established which will guide and oversee the actions set out in the IP. Importantly, an adaptive approach to delivery will be used going forward. This will allow the programme of work to support salmon restoration to be adjusted as we gain more insight into the pressures which are impacting on wild salmon.

We are also working on delivery of a Scottish Government led Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture, which is due to be published soon. The Vision will provide clarity on our long-term ambitions for the sector and will place an enhanced emphasis on environmental protection and community benefits.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hamilton

DMARINE : Aquaculture and Recreational Fisheries

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