

Fortnum & Mason: Fraudulent & Misleading....Fishy & Murky!

– Trading Standards complaint Vs illegally labeled & marketed farmed salmon (7 March 2024)

Please consider this a formal complaint against Fortnum & Mason with respect to breaches of trading standards over the labeling, marketing and selling of salmon at their store located at 181 Piccadilly, St. James's, London, W1A 1ER, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

When \$camon \$cotland visited Fortnum & Mason on Friday (1 March 2024) we discovered breaches of labeling laws – specially in relation to the [Fish Labeling Regulations 2013](#) and [Country of Origin Guidance](#). Please watch [video footage shot inside Fortnum & Mason's on 1 March 2024](#):



When the fishmonger at Fortnum & Mason was asked if salmon on sale in the cabinet above was farmed or wild he said “there is no wild because we don’t do wild”. When \$camon \$cotland pointed out Fortnum & Mason was in breach of labeling laws a manager came out and listened as the breaches were detailed in these four salmon products displayed inside a glass cabinet:



Here is a close-up of one of the labels which fails to mention the country of origin or identify it as farmed:



Thankfully, the Fortnum & Mason manager took note of the complaints and said he would investigate.

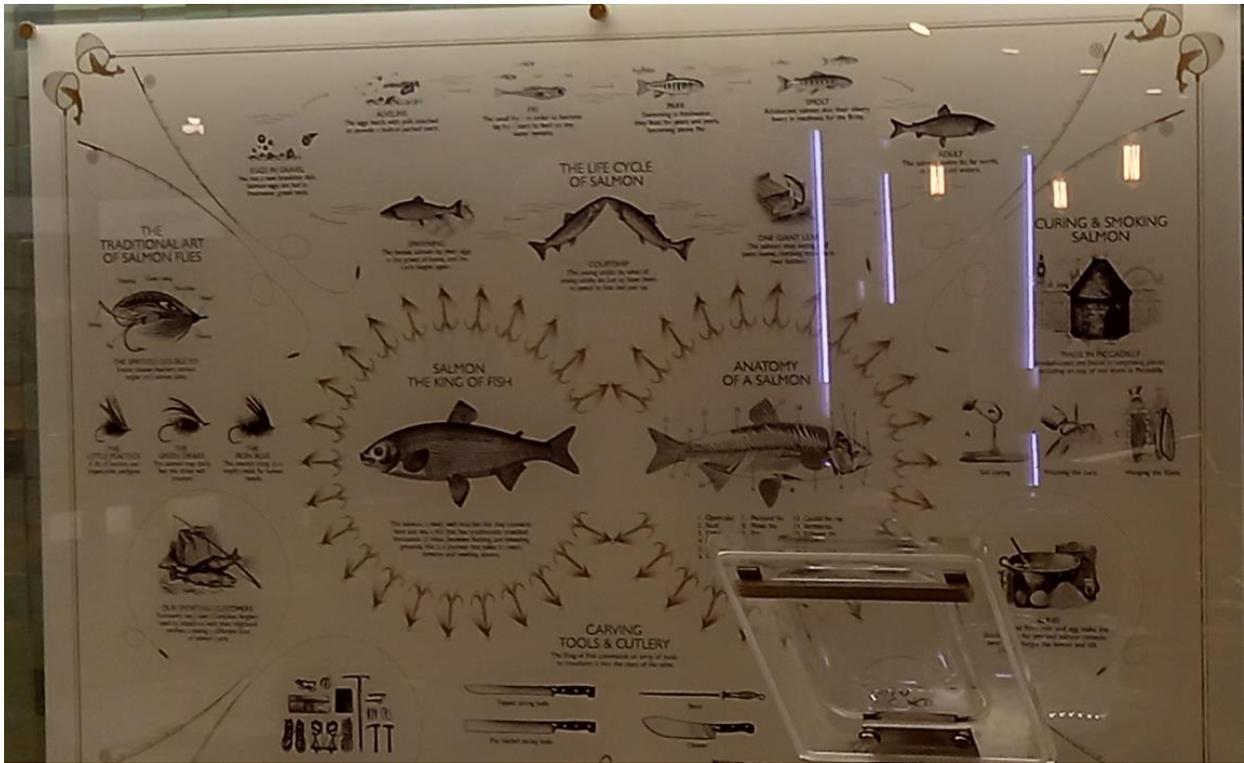


When \$camon \$cotland returned on Monday (4 March 2024) we filmed corrected labeling in the four offending salmon products – watch the video footage [online here](#):



\$camon \$cotland also reiterated the view (expressed off camera to the Fortnum & Mason manager on 1 March) that a poster on display on the wall behind the salmon products – showing the life cycle of wild salmon including fishing flies, nets and fishing rods to conjure up the image of wild caught fish – represented deceptive marketing:





“Yes, I know already,” [said the Fortnum & Mason manager on 4 March 2024](#). “I’m totally aware of that and we are working on this. I can’t take it [down] right now.”

At that point the manager – a different person from 1 March – said Scamon Scotland needed authorisation to film and said she was going to call the security team so we left the store. Here is a [video recorded on 4 March 2024](#) after leaving Fortnum & Mason:



On closer inspection, however, Scamon Scotland is of the view that Fortnum & Mason still needs to remove not only their deceptive poster but also be more specific in the labeling of two of their salmon products on display in the glass cabinet:



“Farmed in the Irish Sea” – as detailed above – still does not name the country of origin (which could actually be Scottish not Irish) and “Farmed in Atlantic” – as detailed below – still does not name the country of origin:



By contrast, these other two corrected labels do appear to fully comply with labeling laws:



A video summary of \$camon \$cotland’s investigation into Fortnum & Mason on 1 and 4 March 2024 is available [online here](#):



Please note - as context to this complaint to Trading Standards - that in the illegal labeling [on display at Fortnum & Mason’s on 1 March 2024](#) there was specific reference to how the salmon “has received Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)” but there was no information on whether it was wild or farmed:



Scamon Scotland maintains that this was another shameless attempt – along with the deceptive poster showing the life cycle of wild salmon – by Fortnum & Mason to deceive customers. The PGI status of salmon is in itself shady. ‘Scottish Wild Salmon’ apparently [received PGI status in 2006](#) and ‘Scottish Farmed Salmon’ [received PGI status in 2012 or 2020](#) or [in 2004 as claimed by Salmon Scotland](#) and it seems that Irish salmon were [refused PGI status by the EC in 2013](#).

Seafood Scotland’s [website](#) claims that Scottish salmon received Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status from the EC in 2004:



Scottish salmon



Guaranteed origin

In 2004, Scottish salmon received Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status from the European Commission, setting it alongside world famous products like Champagne and Parma Ham.

The UK Government [reports that the Scottish Farmed Salmon was PGI registered in 2020 but originally registered with the EU in 2004](#):

From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

Published 4 January 2021

Last updated 20 July 2023 — [See all updates](#)

Registered name: **Scottish Farmed Salmon**
Register: **Foods: designated origin and geographical indication**
Status: **Registered**
Class or category of product: **1.7 Fresh fish, molluscs, and crustaceans and products derived therefrom**
Protection type: **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)**
Country of origin: **United Kingdom**
Date of registration (UK scheme): **31 December 2020**
Time of registration (UK scheme): **23:00**
Date of original registration with the EU: **12 August 2004**
Reason for protection: **UK geographical indication from before 2021**

Product specification

[Scottish Farmed Salmon product specification](#)

Non-minor amendment application

[Scottish Farmed Salmon PGI - Non-minor amendment application](#)



The UK Government [reported in an undated document](#) (perhaps [published in January 2021](#)):

4.8 Labelling:

The entire range of “Scottish Farmed Salmon” products, presentations and dishes including ready meals, salmon mousse and salmon paté are allowed to bear this designation with obligatory mention of the place of manufacturing on their label (accompanied by the reference to the manufacturing process).

In order to avoid discrimination against Scottish Wild Salmon interests, the applicants declare that the continued use of the terms “Scottish Smoked Wild Salmon” and/or any other combination of the terms “Scottish” and “Salmon” in connection with wild salmon shall in no way be affected, provided that these wild salmon are fished in Scotland and that the use of these terms in the labelling are made in such a way as to avoid misleading consumers in relation to the Protected Geographical Indication.

It is the applicants’ intention to promote the fact that Scottish Farmed Salmon is registered as a PGI through use of the logo and the words on the product label, promotional literature, brochures and letterheads.

H. Formans & Son (which seems to supply Fortnum & Mason with London Cure Scottish salmon) [muddied the waters even further when they cited both wild and farmed Scottish salmon in relation to PGI status in a report published in July 2017](#):

PGI London Cure Smoked Salmon hits the headlines

Forman's Smoked Salmon hit the headlines in all the major newspapers including the **Times**, **FT** and **Telegraph** last week as well as featuring in numerous TV broadcasts. The response to our news has been amazing and well received across the globe.

Click [here](#) to watch as Michael Gove tries his hand at pin boning and slicing our salmon, go on a virtual tour of the H. Forman & Son factory & hear Lance Forman's speech in full explaining why PGI was so important to him.

But the celebrations didn't stop there. Here are some words of congratulations, you may recognise some familiar names.

Prime Minister Theresa May: *"This is a fantastic recognition of the hard work you and generations of your family have put in to the business, and it is great news for London and the UK food industry as a whole. It is a particular achievement to be the first London-based food or drink to be recognised in this way".*

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: *"London Cure Smoked Salmon has been cherished by food lovers in the capital for generations and the traditional skills used to produce it today are testament to the rich culinary heritage we have in this country. It will now rightly sit alongside Cornish sardines, Conwy mussels and Whitstable oysters as examples of the world-class produce that uphold our reputation as a great food nation".*

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London: *"There is no doubt that London boasts the most amazing diversity of restaurants in the world. With PGI status in place for London Cure Smoked Salmon, London can now claim culinary greatness for its ingredients too. When I publish my new London Food Strategy next year I'll be showcasing the best of food and drink manufacturing in London. H.Forman & Son is a great example of what this City has to offer as a traditional London firm that has adapted and thrived over the years to become the best in their business. I congratulate them on achieving this prestigious award for London".*

Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth affairs, *gives us congratulations in the video below. Click to watch:*



The hallowed European Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status, enforced by law, is designed to protect and celebrate traditional regional foods, such as Gorgonzola in Italy or Champagne in France. In order to receive this status, the entire product must be processed within a specific region. London Cure smoked salmon has to be produced in the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney or Newham. This status confers a great honour on London Cure salmon, and recognises that UK and London cuisines are globally important cultural artefacts.

Fresh Scottish salmon and Scottish wild salmon already have their own PGI statuses. Smoked salmon originated in Jewish communities in the East End of London at the turn of the last century, so this internationally renowned gourmet food finally has a designation reflecting its century old origin and craft.

As Lance Forman, owner of H. Forman, says: "Mass manufacturing has upended the way salmon is made, and not in a good way. As the fourth-generation leader of a family business, we have seen traditional smokehouses in the East End of London dwindle from a multitude to almost none. Our business is not just to smoke salmon, but to act as keepers of an extraordinary tradition, with the mission and desire to educate the public on how this traditional food should be made".

The ingredients in the London Cure are PGI-protected Scottish salmon, oak smoke and salt. PGI status protects consumers from buying cheap imitations that are not of equivalent quality, have additives, preservatives or sugar. In order to be considered London Cure, the salmon must be smoked and processed entirely by hand. In keeping with tradition, the smoke acts as a seal to lock in the taste of cured salmon rather than to flavour it. As such London Cure salmon is milder and more delicate than mass produced products.

When H. Forman & Son refers above to "PGI-protected Scottish salmon" it seems they are referring to both wild and farmed. However, there is a huge difference between the two products

which some customers of Fortnum & Mason may not be fully aware of (and their confusion will be compounded by the lack of clarity on display in the labeling of salmon).

WildFish [reported in October 2023](#):



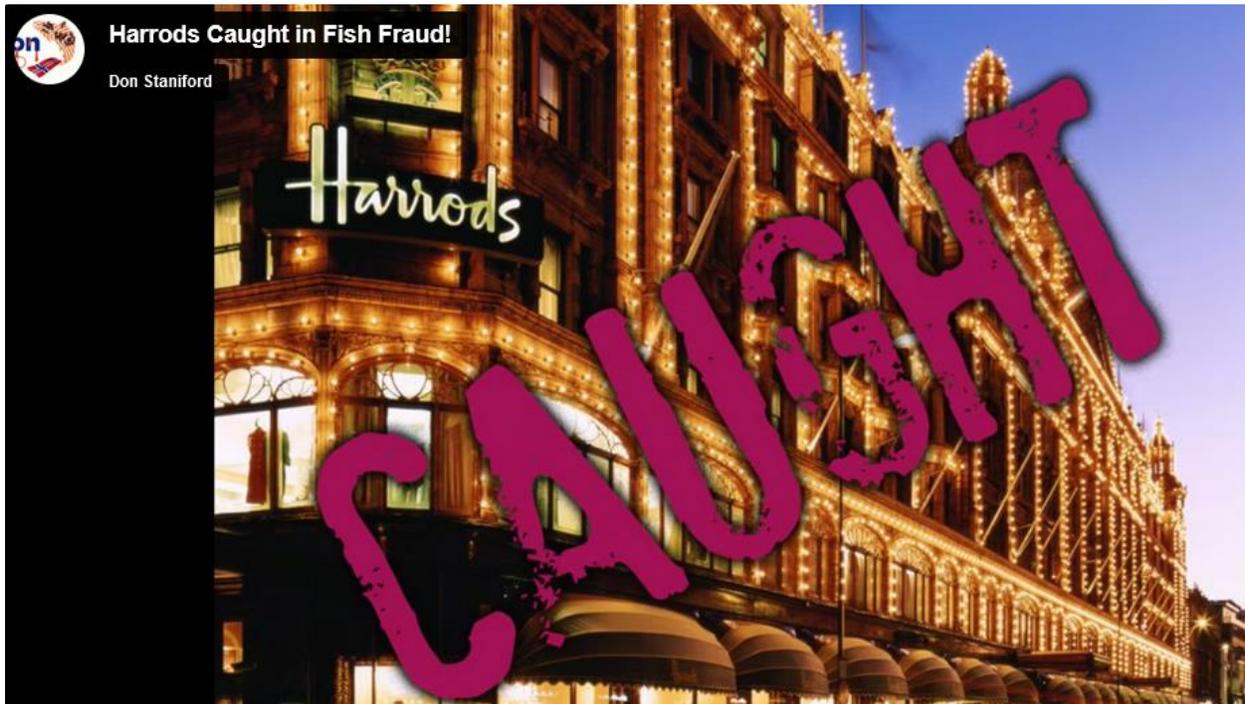
- WildFish Scotland and Coastal Communities Network Scotland submit legal complaint to Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) over industry's claims to be 'sustainable', as part of the body's investigation into greenwash claims made by food companies.
- Complaint comes as Scottish salmon farming industry is separately applying for its protected name (Protected Geographical Indication) to be changed from 'Scottish farmed salmon' to 'Scottish salmon'.
- Both reflect attempts by industry to mislead consumers as to the origins and environmental impact of open-net farmed salmon.

WildFish and CCN's complaint comes as Salmon Scotland has made moves to change the industry's Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) from 'Scottish farmed salmon', to 'Scottish salmon' – a move criticised by numerous environmental and welfare NGOs, as well as chefs and restaurants, as being highly (and deliberately) misleading to consumers.

Customers of Harrods ([subject of another complaint to Trading Standards](#)) are also faced with ‘Genuine Wild’ salmon from H. Forman & Son displayed next to farmed Scottish salmon (also smoked by H. Forman & Son) and farmed salmon from the Faroe Islands:



Watch video footage shot inside Harrods on 1 and 4 March [online here](#):



Wild salmon is not without controversy. The [latest issue of Private Eye](#) (1 to 15 March 2024) reports:

Fishy dishy

Harrods Food Hall, Issue 1618

HARRODS Food Hall describes itself as "the world's greatest food emporium", but customers concerned by the sustainability of their food were less than impressed on a recent visit to the London department store.

Their concern arose at the Harrods fish counter, where a sign read: "River Tweed Wild Smoked Salmon – A rare and decadent treat, a must for all foodies. Line caught on the River Tweed and carefully smoked. £61 per 100g."

It wasn't the shocking price that startled the eco-aware customers, but the fact that the product was wild Atlantic salmon which had been line caught.



CAUGHT OUT: Harrods has got itself into a tangle over its pricey wild salmon

Source code

Harrods' food sustainability policy states that: "Where rated we only source seafood from fisheries and farms that are rated 1 to 3 by the Marine Conservation Society and we avoid all seafood that is amber or red rated on the Good Fish Guide".

Wild-caught Atlantic salmon is rated five by the Marine Conservation Society and labelled red for "avoid".



Customers of Harrods Food Hall have raised concerns about its sustainability policy after finding "River Tweed Wild Smoked Salmon" for sale. Wild Atlantic salmon are rated 'red' (fish to 'avoid') by the Marine Conservation Society.

In the words of our chief executive: "Harrods is showing breathtaking hypocrisy by ignoring its own fish sustainability policy..."

<https://www.private-eye.co.uk/in-the-back>



The ‘Genuine Wild’ salmon – caught on the River Tweed – is displayed only a few yards from a fresh fish counter with farmed salmon from the Faroe Islands (branded as VAR Salmon) which was falsely labeled as wild ‘Caught’ salmon when Scamon Scotland visited on 1 March 2024 but then properly labeled as farmed salmon when we re-visited Harrods on 4 March 2024:



Harrods, 1 March 2024



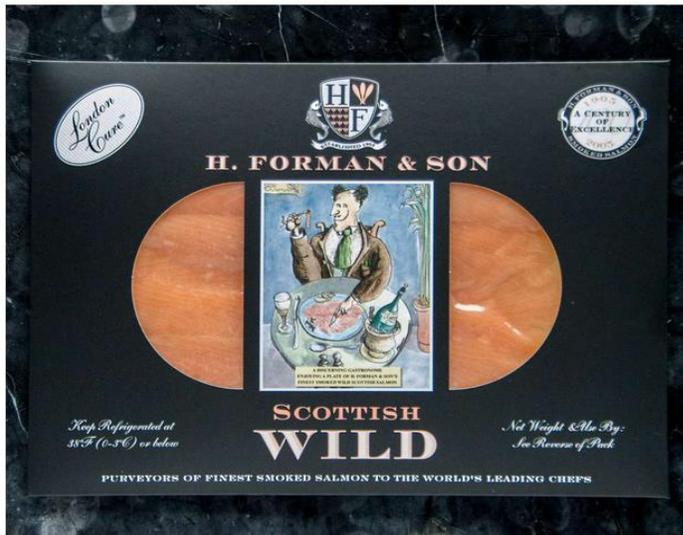
Harrods, 4 March 2024

Read more via: [World’s Best Busted: Harrods Caught in Salmon Scam](#)

H. Forman & Son is crystal clear in their [online marketing of ‘Genuine Wild’ Scottish salmon](#):



PRODUCTS FOR RETAIL > PREPACKED ITEMS > SMOKED SALMON > GENUINE WILD SCOTTISH SMOKED SALMON



GENUINE WILD SCOTTISH SMOKED SALMON

100g, 200g, 400g, 500g, 900g

Ingredients

Genuine Wild Scottish Salmon (FISH), Rock Salt, Oak Smoke. Allergens in capital letters

Shelf Life

14 days

Origin

Scotland

LANCE SAYS

The Atlantic salmon is the king of fish, and those caught in the estuaries of Scotland are renowned for their flavour.

However, H. Forman & Son is less transparent in the marketing of Scottish farmed salmon – not using the term ‘farmed’ at all and instead using ‘harvested’ in this [London Cure gift pack](#):



PRODUCTS FOR RETAIL > PREPACKED ITEMS > SMOKED SALMON > LONDON CURE SMOKED SALMON - SMALL BLACK GIFT PACK



LONDON CURE SMOKED SALMON - SMALL BLACK GIFT PACK

100g, 125g, 200g

Ingredients

Salmon (FISH), Salt, Oak Smoke. Allergens in capital letters

Shelf Life

14 days

Origin

Scotland

Top quality Grade One salmon. Harvested in Scottish lochs it arrives at the smokehouse within 48 hours of harvest.

There is also no reference to any artificial colours added to the salmon farming process. In terms of PGI ‘Scottish Farmed Salmon’, [the UK Government stated](#) that: “The flesh colour must have a minimum intensity of 26 on the Roche Scale.”

The ‘Roche Scale’ relates to the level of [artificial colourings such as Canthaxanthin](#) and [Astaxanthin](#) which are added to the feed of farmed salmon to [synthetically dye the flesh pink](#).



Suffice to say that there is world of difference between farmed salmon with a fake tan and natural wild salmon. Hence the importance of [labeling laws and regulations](#) to distinguish between wild and farmed salmon.

The use of PGI in the labeling of farmed salmon by Fortnum & Mason is at best misleading and at worst illegal. The ‘Secret Smokehouse Salmon’ labeled as ‘Farmed in Irish Sea’ may not even be Irish. The [Secret Smokehouse website](#) states that “all of our salmon is farmed in Scotland”:

SECRET SMOKEHOUSE Search...

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We are proud to have PGI certification for our 'London Cure Smoked Salmon', which we were awarded in 2017 when the PGI was first formalised. It sits alongside Champagne and Parma Ham, which have gained this elusive and quality-guaranteeing recognition for truly outstanding and historically important products. **London Cure Smoked Salmon** can only be produced in the East End of London, nowhere else [come find us by London Fields]. Secret Smokehouse only works with high welfare fish. All of our salmon is farmed in Scotland then hand-filleted and oak-smoked on site using traditional techniques. The salmon has a gentle smoke and a 'melt in your mouth consistency' which calls for simple preparation—perfect with brown bread and a squeeze of lemon or purely on its own

SECRET SMOKEHOUSE Search... Q

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1.2 kg PGI Status London Cure Smoked Salmon Whole Fillet D-Cut Sliced £90.00	1.2 kg PGI Status London Cure Smoked Salmon Whole Fillet (trimmed) £85.00	1.2 kg PGI Status London Cure Smoked Salmon Whole Fillet (untrimmed) £80.00

The controversy over the labeling of Scottish salmon in particular can be illustrated by media coverage in October 2023 following [an application by Salmon Scotland \(the trade body representing Scottish salmon farmers\) to remove the word ‘Farmed’ from PGI status](#):

[Scottish salmon producers want ‘farmed’ taken off labels - Environmental activists say scrapping the description would risk misleading consumers](#)
[Take the word ‘farmed’ off our farmed salmon, pleads industry body](#)
[WildFish and community groups raise alarm on ‘sustainable’ greenwashing claims made by Scottish salmon farming industry](#)

As The Times [reported in October 2023](#):

Abigail Penny, executive director of Animal Equality, which has filmed salmon in Scottish fish farms being eaten alive by lice, said the industry's attempt to eliminate "farmed" from its PGI labelling was "deeply troubling".

"This move poses a serious risk of misleading consumers, jeopardising their ability to make truly informed choices," she said.

"The inescapable reality is that tens of millions of Atlantic salmon suffer at the hands of the Scottish farmed salmon industry every year. These naturally migratory animals are confined in cramped underwater cages that act as a hotbed for disease and lice outbreaks."

As The Ferret [reported in October 2023](#):

Critics of the move include John Robins, a veteran environmental campaigner who worked with Animal Concern, but is now the managing director of Ethical Promotions Ltd. He lodged an objection with Defra which has been seen by The Ferret.

Robins wrote: "Salmon farmers in Scotland have long sought to mislead the public into thinking of their product as the same as wild salmon migrating back to Scottish rivers and lochs and leaping up waterfalls to reach their traditional spawning grounds. Such scenes have often been used to promote the product and mislead consumers."

Robins added: "Because the public are becoming more aware of the many negative aspects of salmon farming the industry wants to distance itself from their own failings by dropping the word 'farmed' from the description of their product. Like the use of the phrase 'responsibly sourced' this is a calculated and deliberate attempt to confuse and mislead shoppers."

His views were shared by the anti-fish farm campaigner, Don Staniford, director of [scamon scotland](#). He said: "All Scottish salmon on sale in supermarkets is factory farmed in cages not caught in the wild. Removing the word farmed is greenwashing of the highest order and must be resisted at all costs."

Delve deeper and it is clear that all Fortnum & Mason's salmon – unlike Harrods – is farmed. Fortnum & Mason state in a [‘Sustainability & Social Responsibility Report’ for 2021](#) that all their retail farmed salmon is Scottish and their organic farmed salmon is from Northern Ireland:

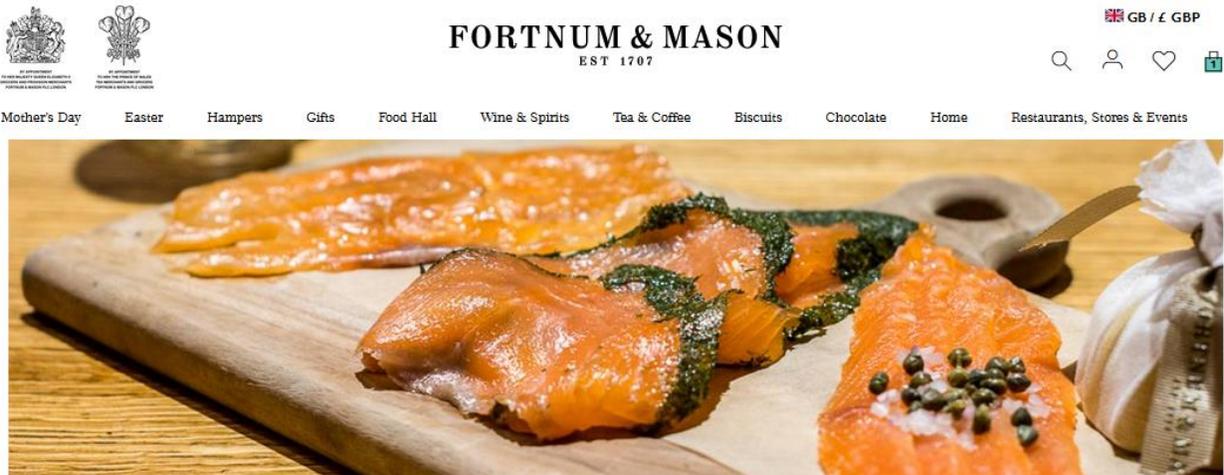
Fortnum & Mason Sustainability & Social Responsibility Report 2021 Highlights

FISH

We ceased selling wet fish from our store during 2015 and for our restaurants we ensure that any fish used adheres to the Marine Conservation Society fish rating guidelines, whereby we will only select fish rated 4 (Green) or below.

All our retail farmed salmon is Scottish and from RSPCA assured farms. Our organic farmed salmon comes from a single source farm in Northern Ireland and is chosen for its choice of diet for the salmon, stocking density and strong tidal waters.

Fortnum & Mason [admit on their website](#) that their smoked Scottish salmon is farmed:



Scottish Smoked Salmon

SERVING SUGGESTIONS, RECIPES & PAIRINGS. THE WORKS.

Here's all you need to know about our scrumptious Scottish Smoked Salmon. From its spectacular smoking in Scotland to the wines perfect for pairing, you won't question this summer favourite again.

What makes our Smoked Salmon so unique?

Sourced in Scotland from one RSPCA accredited producer, our salmon has full traceability and qualifies with good animal husbandry and farm practices

However, this aptly-named ‘[Secret Smokehouse](#)’ salmon – marketed online by Fortnum & Mason - fails to mention the country of origin or the fact that the product is farmed:



FORTNUM & MASON
EST 1707

Mother's Day Easter Hampers Gifts Food Hall Wine & Spirits Tea & Coffee Biscuits Chocolate Home Restaurants, Stores & Events

Secret Smokehouse Cure Smoked Salmon, 200g

£17.95 (£17.95 each) Catalogue code: 5033909

Unfortunately, this product is currently out of stock.

Product Description

Traditionally smoked in London's East End, this salmon has a delicate smoke and firm flesh that results in a creamy fish. Enjoy it in a bagel or alongside your breakfast scrambled eggs.

Secret Smokehouse follows a long line of fish curers and smokers in the heart of East London. The smokehouse produces entirely handmade PGI status "London Cure Smoked Salmon", Oak Smoked Trout and Kippers Cured to traditional techniques that date back to the 1800's.

And this ‘[Royal Fillet Scottish Smoked Salmon](#)’ product identifies it as Scottish (or at least smoked in Scotland) but fails to identify it as farmed:



FORTNUM & MASON
EST 1707

GB / £ GBP

Mother's Day Easter Hampers Gifts Food Hall Wine & Spirits Tea & Coffee Biscuits Chocolate Home Restaurants, Stores & Events

Home → Truffled Royal Fillet Scottish Smoked Salmon 300g

Truffled Royal Fillet Scottish Smoked Salmon, 300g

£50.00 (£50.00 each) Catalogue code: 8022943

Unfortunately, this product is currently out of stock.

Product Description

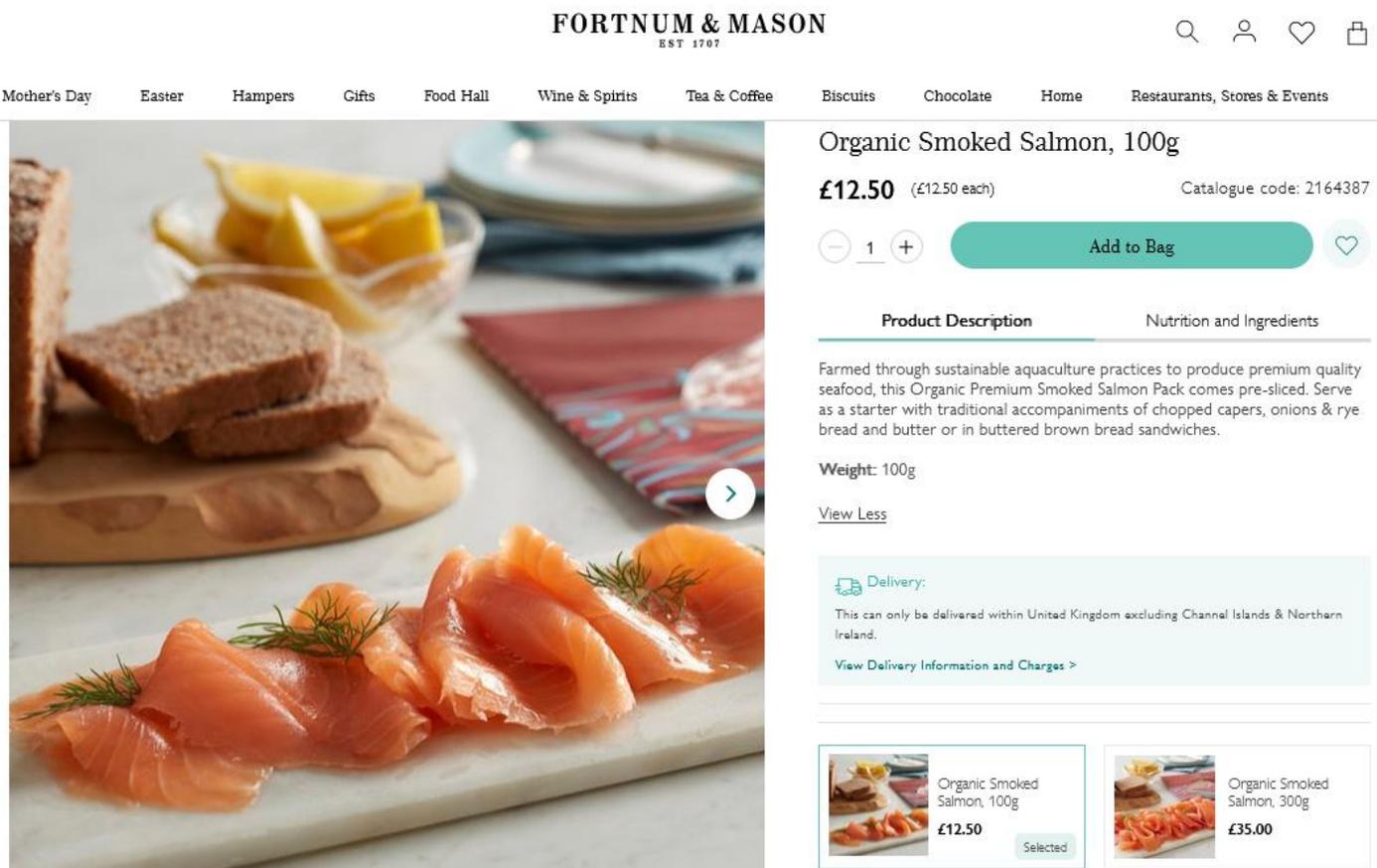
Starting from the very best single source, welfare accredited raw fish, this smoked salmon has been produced by hand at every stage. From the careful selection of premium, firm graded fish to the hand filleting and hand salting.

Our salmon sides are smoked in traditional smokeboxes with fires that are monitored by hand and constantly burning. The salmon is smoked for between 24 and 72 over British Oak and the smoking time depends on many external factors which is why the time can vary. Beautifully elegant, the heady aroma of black and white truffle adds a touch of decadence to the fish.

Fortnum & Mason's [online shop](#) identifies their smoked salmon as farmed although the organic smoked salmon is not immediately labeled as such:



The [organic smoked salmon product on sale at Fortnum & Mason's online shop](#) fails to specify the country of origin (which is understood to be Northern Ireland):



Whereas the [Fortnum's Farmed Scottish Smoked Salmon product](#) does identify the country of origin:

The screenshot shows the Fortnum & Mason website. At the top, there are logos for the Royal Warrant and the Fortnum & Mason crest, followed by the brand name 'FORTNUM & MASON EST 1707'. On the right, there is a language/currency selector for 'GB / £ GBP' and icons for search, user profile, heart, and cart. A navigation menu includes categories like 'Mother's Day', 'Easter', 'Hampers', 'Gifts', 'Food Hall', 'Wine & Spirits', 'Tea & Coffee', 'Biscuits', 'Chocolate', 'Home', and 'Restaurants, Stores & Events'. A green banner below the menu reads 'Don't Delay! Order by 2pm Saturday, March 9th for Next Day Delivery in Time for Mother's Day. Shop Now!'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home → Food Hall → Fresh Food → Fish & Keta → Farmed Scottish Smoked Salmon 200g'. The main product image shows smoked salmon on a plate with bread, lemons, and coffee. To the right of the image, the product title is 'Fortnum's Farmed Scottish Smoked Salmon, 200g', the price is '£15.00 (£15.00 each)', and the catalogue code is '2136123'. There is an 'Add to Bag' button and a quantity selector set to '1'. Below the image, there are two tabs: 'Product Description' and 'Nutrition and Ingredients'. The 'Product Description' tab is active, showing text about the salmon's source and smoking process. The 'Weight: 200g' and a 'View Less' link are also visible.

Finally, please note a similar complaint filed on 4 March 2024 vs Harrods:

From: **Don Staniford** <salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, 4 Mar 2024, 09:38

Subject: Complaint vs Harrods for breaching trading standards re. 'caught' farmed salmon

To: <environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk>

Please consider this a formal complaint against Harrods for falsely labelling farmed salmon as 'caught'.

I think this is a very simple case which may already have been rectified by Harrods following a visit to their store in Knightsbridge on Friday 1 March.

Suffice to say that Harrods was labelling farmed salmon as 'caught' on their fresh fish counter - here's the offending labelling:



Video footage shot on Friday morning (ca. 11am) shows the illegal labelling and discussion with the fishmonger (who admitted the labelling was in error and a Harrods manager who appeared to confirm the mislabelling and agree to change it):

<https://vimeo.com/918584818/33e8eb721e> (Harrods fishmonger admitting the 'caught' label was wrong and agreeing to change it)

<https://vimeo.com/918581406/593bc26017> (Harrods manager discussion on changing the 'caught' labelling)

I have also notified Harrods via their online customer service message system of this complaint but their online system does not allow videos or photos to be attached. Please forward it directly to Harrods if you have an email address.

I must confess that the accommodating attitude of Harrods was in stark contrast to Selfridges who repeatedly refused to accept that their fish labelling was wrong - prompting intervention by Westminster Trading Standards in December 2023. This was reported in the Daily Telegraph via <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/07/selfridges-remove-marketing-claiming-salmon-sustainable/>

I sincerely hope that Harrods has voluntarily corrected their labelling and will be checking on that later today.

Thanks,

Don Staniford

Director, \$camon \$cotland