

[Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture](#), 4th September 2016

**U.S. ban for lethal Scottish salmon
- £200 million in exports killed off by seal slaughter**

The UK's #1 food export - Scottish salmon - faces being banned from the lucrative U.S. market over Scotland's ongoing seal slaughter which exceeds 1,500 dead seals since 2011

Read more in today's Sunday Herald: "[End the slaughter of seals in Scotland now](#)"

To comply with new U.S. standards to be implemented on 1 January 2017, importing countries must implement a regulatory program that "prohibits the intentional killing or serious injury of marine mammals in all fisheries" stated the [import provisions](#) issued last month.

Read more via "[NOAA establishes international marine mammal bycatch criteria for U.S. imports](#)" and "[Seafood Import Provisions under the Marine Mammal Protection Act](#)"

"The new U.S. rules are a body blow for Scottish salmon which is shamefully drenched in the blood of dead seals," said Don Staniford, Director of the [Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture](#). "If Scottish salmon farmers do not stop killing seals then this ruling could cost the industry [over £200 million](#) per year and leave a gaping hole in the [UK's number one food export](#)."



[Photo of a dead seal killed near a Marine Harvest salmon farm in Loch Alsh, Scotland - download image [online here](#) with more photos [online here](#)]

Since [official Government figures](#) were disclosed in 2011, over 750 seals have been killed at Scottish salmon farms (read more via "[Mapped: every Scottish salmon farm that shot seals](#)") with over 800 killed by river fisheries and netting stations. 241 seals were killed by salmon farms in [2011](#) with 208 dead seals in [2012](#), 105 dead seals in [2013](#), 80 in [2014](#) and 95 in [2015](#). Of the 24 seals reported killed thus far in 2016 (only Q1 data is [available online](#)) all but one were killed by salmon farms.

The U.S. is the largest export market for Scottish farmed salmon accounting for [30,000 tonnes in 2015](#) at [a value of £215 million in 2014](#). With 186,508 tonnes of Scottish farmed [forecast to be produced in 2015](#) that means one in six or 16% of Scottish farmed salmon is exported to the U.S. Farmed salmon is the largest food export from Scotland, accounting for around [40% of total value and in 2014 it also topped the list of UK food exports](#).

During the first quarter of 2016, [official Government figures](#) show that salmon farmers have already killed 23 seals including 10 by [Scottish Sea Farms](#) (Bight of Bellister, Vidlin North, Slocka Ronas Voe, Shapinsay, Kishorn West and Loch Spelve), six by [Marine Harvest](#) (Eilean Grianain, Isle Ewe, Torridon, Greshornish, Maol Ban) and four by [Loch Duart](#) in the Sound of Harris. An [analysis of the data in October 2015](#) revealed that [Scottish Sea Farms](#) (who exclusively supply [Marks & Spencer](#)) were Scotland's worst serial killers with 150 dead seals followed by [Grieg Seafood Hjaltland](#) (136 seals killed), the [Scottish Salmon Company](#) (128 seals killed) and [Marine Harvest](#) (76 seals killed).

"Instead of shooting themselves in the wallet, Scottish salmon farmers should hang up their guns and stop killing seals," continued Staniford. "Risking over £200 million in exports in order to kill less than one hundred seals is a sure fire way of going broke. Shoppers should steer clear of ethically bankrupt Scottish salmon. Scottish salmon, you're fired!"



"Since each seal killed by salmon farmers in Scotland currently costs the UK economy approximately £2.5 million, surely it would be cheaper to bite the bullet and install predator nets [at a cost of £40,000 per cage?](#)" concluded Staniford. "Even if that means £1 million per farm and a capital outlay of nearly £150 million - the [latest Scottish Government fish farm](#)

[survey](#) details 143 salmon farms in production - it would be worth the long term investment. Scotland's seals certainly think it is time to stop shooting and start investing in predator nets."



The threat of a U.S. on Scottish salmon comes in the wake of the publication of a new paper in *Frontiers of Marine Science*. "The current legislation does not specify closed seasons to protect breeding seals and 35% of necropsied seals were pregnant gray seals," stated the [paper](#) from the University of Edinburgh and University of Bristol. "Seals have also been shot during their lactation periods when pups are dependent on their mothers. This raises significant welfare concerns".



[Seal corpses recovered near Marine Harvest's salmon farm in Loch Alsh - [download image online here](#)]

"The majority of the seal management cases necropsied at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Wildlife Unit were found to have been shot effectively with a single shot destroying the cranial vault ([SRUC Wildlife Unit, 2012](#); [Brownlow and Davison, 2013, 2014](#))," continued the [paper](#). "However, each seal management case study report highlights at least one case of concern. In 2012 two seals (out of the 21 examined) showed signs of multiple gunshot wounds and blood aspiration which suggested that they had not been killed by the first shot ([SRUC Wildlife Unit, 2012](#)). In 2013, one seal (out of the seven examined) had been shot in the neck and, in 2014, one (out of the six examined) had been shot through the mandible ([Brownlow and Davison, 2013, 2014](#))."

Read the paper in full via "[Does the Seal Licensing System in Scotland Have a Negative Impact on Seal Welfare?](#)"

More news via "[End the slaughter of seals in Scotland now](#)" and "[Charity makes plea to end seal shooting in Scotland](#)"

An [analysis by GAAIA](#) in November 2015 also found that a tiny proportion of seal corpses were reported let alone recovered or collected. In fact, of the 51 seals killed in the first two quarters of 2015 (January to July) zero carcasses were recovered or collected and only three were reported to the [Scottish Marine Animal Strandings Scheme](#). Out of 173 seals killed during 2013 and 2014 a total of 19 carcasses (11%) were reported, 16 carcasses recovered (9%) and only one carcass (<1%) collected (read more via "[Appendix: Companies, Regions & Sites](#)").



[Dead seals found near Marine Harvest's salmon farm in Loch Alsh, Scotland - download image [online here](#)]

Scotland is not the only country under fire for the deliberate killing of marine mammals. Chile, Canada, New Zealand and Australia have been subject to criticism for the killing of sea lions, seals, dolphins and even whales.

In Australia, seals have been killed on salmon farms in Tasmania (read more via "[Tasmania's salmon trade casts deadly net](#)"). Environment Tasmania [report](#) that: "As of June 2013, at least 144 protected seals have died as a result of fish farming in just four years". The Tasmanian Times [reported](#) in July 2015: "the Tasmanian Government seal management strategy has resulted in normally protected seals being deliberately killed with Government approval".

In Chile, a photo of salmon farmers killing a sea lion attracted the [condemnation of both the Chilean Government and salmon farming industry](#) itself in July 2015. Sernapesca filed a formal complaint for animal abuse following the identification of the salmon farming company responsible (read more via "[Sernapesca files formal complaint over salmon farm workers' animal abuse](#)").

In New Zealand, at least four dolphins and four seals have been killed in salmon farms in the Marlborough Sounds since 2011 (read more via "[Dolphins die on NZ King Salmon farms](#)").

In Canada, data on mortalities at salmon farms in British Columbia is routinely [published online by the Government](#). For example, the [data published for Q4 2015](#) (October-December) reveals the deliberate killing of 15 California sea lions by Cermaq in Clayoquot UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. In 2013, a [humpback whale was also found dead in a salmon farm](#) in Clayoquot Sound. In 2014 there was also a [humpback whale killed by a salmon farm](#) off the Isle of Mull in Scotland.



Backgrounder:

Campaigners have been calling for a U.S. ban on farmed salmon sourced from farms which killed seals and sea lions for over a decade. In 2005, following a [positive legal opinion](#) and the [slaughter of seals by Marine Harvest Scotland](#) the [Pure Salmon Campaign](#) urged the U.S. Government to ban imports via the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The Sunday Express [reported](#) in December 2005:



US to block seal cull farm salmon

EXCLUSIVE
By **Meg Milne**

US Government officials are set to ban the import of Scottish salmon from fish farms where seals are shot. The move follows Scottish Sunday Express revelations that seals are being slaughtered in the sea around Skye.

A secret cull is being carried out by marksmen for a multi-million-pound salmon giant in a bid to protect their fish stocks.

Yesterday it was revealed government lawyers in Washington are studying a legal opinion warning that under the US Marine Mammal Protection Act it is illegal to sell fish produced on farms that shoot seals.

Amsterdam-based Marine Harvest, which predicts an annual turnover of one billion euros this year, ordered the cull after losing around 3,000 fish.

Marine Harvest, part of the giant Nutreco multi-national, which employs 6,000 people in eight countries, insist seals have must be shot to stop them attacking salmon at their Hebrides fish farm.

Yesterday, Don Staniford, the European co-ordinator of Pure Salmon, a fish-farming pressure group, applauded the American move.

Mr Staniford said: "Either the company stops killing seals or they potentially lose access to one of the world's largest farmed salmon markets.

"The simple solution to the problem - as well as escapes, waste pollution and discharges - is to enclose the cages."

On Friday, Mr Staniford attended a Nutreco meeting in Amsterdam and presented a dossier of our revelations to the company's board.

Nutreco bosses were also given a copy of the legal opinion warning of US prohibition on the importation of salmon from their fish farm.

The controversial cull, to the west of Sron an Tairbh at Loch Alsh, has been condemned by campaigners demanding seals are given more protection.

Local businessman Nigel Smith, who runs a local wildlife tourist business, photographed some of the dead animals.

Mr Smith said: "When I went past with a boat load of tourists, all they could see was carcasses rotting on the beach.

Marine Harvest insist they only shoot seals "as a last resort".

SEAL CULL: The animals are being shot to protect fish farms

Read more press coverage [online here](#) and via GAAIA's "[The Killing Farms](#)"

In 2011, a coalition of animal welfare and environmental groups [wrote to the U.S. Government](#): "Based on the continued killing of marine mammals, we therefore ask that imports of farmed salmon from those countries and companies sponsoring and sanctioning lethal controls be excluded from the U.S. market," stated the letter which was co-signed by Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Society, John Robins of Animal Concern and other concerned citizens from around the world.

In 2012, The Sunday Express [reported](#):

Picture: JOHN GILES/PA

Fish ban call over seal culls



TARGETED: More than 300 seals have been killed in Scotland in the course of a year

ANIMAL rights groups have called for a ban on Scottish salmon after new figures revealed that fish farms killed more than 300 seals in just one year.

Campaigners say retailers have "blood on their hands" after the shocking extent of the legal cull was revealed after a Freedom of Information request.

The data, supplied by Marine Scotland, showed hundreds of the mammals were destroyed over the 12 months to April.

And now the activists are compiling a "name and shame" list of the firms, which "murder" seals "wholly unnecessarily".

The Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture (GAAlA) and the Save Our

By **Paula Murray**

Seals Fund (SOSF) repeated the plea to ban salmon imports while asking supermarkets to stop sourcing "seal-unfriendly" fish.

Don Staniford, of the GAAlA, said: "Scotland's seal killers should hang their heads in shame and hang up their guns."

"Supermarkets such as Sainsbury's and Tesco, which condone the killing of seals by selling seal-unfriendly farmed salmon have blood on their hands."

The SOSF Scotland has approached the US Department of Commerce to use existing legislation to ban the import of

Scottish farmed salmon until they install seal exclusion nets.

According to the groups, only a fifth of the country's fish farms use the predator nets, yet the law says the animals cannot be shot without a licence – and even then, destruction must be as a "last resort".

But the Scottish Government insisted strict licensing means seals are given an "unprecedented level of protection".

A spokeswoman said "few" animals target fish entering fisheries and nets, or attack farms, and added: "Licensing is necessary to control the removal of these seals, as a last-resort measure after any non-lethal alternatives have failed."

[John Robins](#), Secretary of [Save Our Seals Fund](#) in Scotland, [said](#): "We have asked the US Department of Commerce to use existing US marine mammal protection laws to ban the import of salmon from Scottish floating factory fish farms. I hope the US Government can force Scottish salmon farmers to install seal exclusion nets, something the Scottish Government and the RSPCA have disgracefully failed to do. When you buy Scottish farmed salmon, even RSPCA-endorsed Scottish farmed salmon, you pay for bullets to shoot seals."

In 2012, NOAA stated in a [letter to Save Our Seals Fund](#):

The MMPA prohibits the intentional killing of marine mammals in commercial fishing operations, which includes aquaculture farms. Specifically, section 101(a)(2) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2)) states that "[t]he Secretary of the Treasury shall ban the importation of commercial fish or products from fish which have been caught with commercial fishing technology which results in the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of ocean mammals in excess of United States standards..." Section 102 (c)(3) states that it is unlawful to import into the United States "... any fish, whether fresh, frozen, or otherwise prepared, if such fish was caught in a manner which the Secretary has proscribed for persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, whether or not any marine mammals were in fact taken incident to the catching of the fish."

In 2010, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service published in the *Federal Register* an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR; <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-10158.pdf>) announcing that we were developing a proposed rule to establish the standards that would determine which commercial fish products would be eligible for importation and deemed in compliance with these import provisions of the MMPA. This rulemaking would define the "United States standards" referred to in MMPA section 101(a)(2), along with any associated criteria by which the United States would assess foreign fisheries that supply fish and fish product imports to the United States. The rule also would describe procedures for ensuring the established standards and their associated criteria are met, as well as procedures for developing recommendations regarding import prohibitions if those standards and associated criteria are not met.

In August 2015, GAAIA [submitted formal comments and wrote a letter](#) to the US Department of Commerce's consultation on the [Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act](#).

Scottish salmon farmers have lobbied for years to keep the names of farms killing seals confidential. In December 2012 the Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation - the trade body representing salmon farmers in Scotland - wrote to the Scottish Government imploring that disclosure would "[have a direct impact on the safety of their employees and on the market success of their products](#)".



Willie Cowan
Marine Scotland
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay 1-B
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

December 6th 2012

Dear Willie

Information Commissioner Decision 193/2012

Following the recent decision by the Information Commissioner to permit the disclosure of locations where seals have been shot at salmon farms, I have been asked to write to you on behalf of SSPO members.

Our membership is extremely dismayed by this decision and believes it will have a direct impact on the safety of their employees and on the market success of their products. Don Staniford stated in this week's media that "the consumer now has the opportunity to boycott salmon from the named farms".

Bearing this additional information in mind, SSPO member companies would expect the Scottish Government automatically to appeal this decision.

Could you please confirm that this is your intention?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Landsburgh". The signature is fluid and cursive.

SCOTT LANDSBURGH
Chief Executive

However, in July 2015 GAAIA won a [landmark victory](#) following a [ruling from the Scottish Information Commissioner](#) forcing the Scottish Government to [name and shame](#) salmon farms in Scotland shooting seals.

In November 2015, The Sunday Times [revealed](#) that 80% of salmon farms in Scotland still do not use anti-predator nets and 67% do not use seal blinds despite claims that seals are only shot as a 'last resort'.

"I am pleased to support those campaigning for an end to seal deaths," said Alison Johnstone, Member of the Scottish Parliament, who joined a protest outside M&S in December 2015. "People buying farmed salmon in Scotland will be appalled to learn that there is no requirement on salmon producers to have nets to deter seals. If those making vast profits from salmon sales aren't prepared to invest in this preventative measure, they cannot claim that shooting a seal is a last resort. It is a lazy, greedy response that contradicts the image the producers and our supermarkets seek to promote and it has to stop."



[Photo by [Colin McPherson](#): Alison Johnstone MSP handing out leaflets outside M&S in Edinburgh in December 2015: download high res image [online here](#)]

Read more about GAAIA's campaign to end the killing of seals on salmon farms [online here](#)

Including:

["Closing the Net On 'Seal-Friendly' Scottish Salmon"](#) (29 December 2015)

["Scottish Salmon Blinded by Seal Killing"](#) (29 November 2015)

["Stop Shooting Seals for Salmon Meals"](#) (30 October 2015)

["Cecil the Seal Killers Named & Shamed in Scotland - Call for Boycott of "Seal Unfriendly" Scottish Salmon"](#) (30 August 2015)

["VICTORY: Disclosure of Seal-Killing Salmon Farm Data Ordered by 21 August"](#) (7 July 2015)

["Scottish Salmon's Secret Seal Killers! - FOI refusal prompts call for boycott of farmed salmon"](#) (24 August 2014)

["Lethal Scottish Farmed Salmon: Serial Seal Killers Named & Shamed!"](#) (8 May 2013)

["Scottish Salmon's Seal Killers Named & Shamed!"](#) (2 December 2012)

