



E-NEWSLETTER

**Salmon & Trout Association
E-Newsletter
Easter 2010**

AQUACULTURE

S&TA Aquaculture Review Published

On March 22nd, we published the review undertaken by our Head of Science, Janina Gray, into the scientific evidence over the impact of salmon farming on wild salmon and sea trout and their environment. The review, which looked at 137 peer reviewed papers from mainly Norwegian, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Chile, showed conclusively that aquaculture can impact wild stocks, particularly from sea lice infestation, escapees interbreeding with natives and diluting gene pools, and polluting the immediate area around farms and upsetting benthic communities. To read the Executive Summary and the full report, [click here](#).

Media Coverage

The press release accompanying the report spawned plenty of media interest in Scotland. We conducted radio interviews with several stations, including BBC Radio Scotland, and there were articles and letters in Scottish papers. The Chief Executive was interviewed on BBC Farming Today on Friday morning, and this can be listened to on the BBC iPlayer until Thursday April 1st.

S&TA Policy Statement

As a result of the report, S&TA has produced an Aquaculture policy statement. The full statement includes a 9 point action plan which we believe needs to be actioned if the aquaculture industry is to achieve sustainability, with minimum impact on wild fish. The ultimate aim of the Scottish Government and industry must be for salmon farming to operate within totally enclosed systems, whether on land or at sea, so that there is no interaction between farmed fish and wild salmon and sea trout. For the full Policy Statement, [click here](#).

Scottish Government

We have approached the civil servants advising the Scottish Government over fisheries issues and aquaculture. We have sent them all the relevant papers, and now challenged them to address three of the nine action points immediately:

- participate in drawing up a list of ecologically and economically sensitive sites on the Scottish West Coast and Islands, both those with and without existing aquaculture units
- agree to the premise that no new aquaculture units should be permitted on sites identified on the above list, unless agreed with local wild fish interests/national wild fish organisations and operated within totally enclosed systems
- agree in principle to participating in a project to relocate an existing unit identified on the above list, and monitoring the effects on wild salmon and sea trout runs, and the benthic ecology around the vacated site

In addition, with both Norway and Chile recently announcing statutory standards for sea lice and escapees respectively, we have told the Scottish Government that salmon farming can no longer credibly operate under a voluntary code of practice. As sea lice levels on Scottish salmon farms present the most urgent problem, we are seeking assurance that the Scottish Government will move quickly towards instigating statutory lice levels (set with reference to a lice dispersal model), together with a credible monitoring programme and robust sanctions on those farm units failing to operate within the required standard.

Scotland's own Scientists agree there's an impact!

One paper Janina did not review because of publication timings was authored by scientists working for the Scottish Government's Marine Scotland Science. The paper (*Biol. Lett.* published online 17 February 2010: S. J. Middlemas, J. A. Raffell, D. W. Hay, M. Hatton-Ellis and J. D. Armstrong - Temporal and spatial patterns of sea lice levels on sea trout in western Scotland in relation to fish farm production cycles) concludes, "...the data presented here suggests that there is a link between Atlantic salmon farms and lice burdens on wild trout (meaning sea trout) in the West of Scotland." In fact, one of the startling statistics from the report shows that 90 sea trout of 748 sampled had lice burdens above the 'critical threshold'. This is bad enough, until you read a qualification in the report's conclusion that, 'the data...would not provide information regarding those fish that had already died'!

Aquaculture Petition

A reminder that the petition will be handed in to the Scottish Government towards the middle or end of May – so, still time to sign at , and to get your friends to do so as well. The petition will give us another PR opportunity but, more importantly, should be all the more potent in the light of the science paper. At the very least, it should force a debate in Parliament. [Sign here.](#)

S&TA Membership

The Aquaculture report took Janina very nearly six months to compile, in addition to all the other scientific work she needs to undertake on a regular basis to support our influencing work and policy statements. This is vital input to ensure that issues concerning the management and protection of wild salmon, trout and their environment are approached in a credible, scientific way which decision makers cannot fob off as merely the ramblings of a bunch of anglers. But it all requires valuable resources and so, if you are not already an S&TA member, please help us by joining the Association, [join here](#), or even make a donation to our work [click here](#).

And don't forget to gift aid your subscription or donation in the appropriate place, and so make your contribution even more valuable.

Happy Easter

Meanwhile, a very happy Easter to you all – enjoy the chocolate, but just think for a few moments about that smoked farm salmon you might be eating...!

www.salmon-trout.org

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