

Nature in brief

14: Finfish Aquaculture



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Aquaculture is the rearing of aquatic organisms in marine and freshwater environments. The dominant form of aquaculture in Scotland is fish farming, in particular farming of **Atlantic salmon** (*Salmo salar*), which is the UK's number one food export.

The Trust considers that the salmon farming industry is failing to mitigate its environmental impact¹ and for the industry to grow sustainably it must address the following concerns:

- **Sea lice** on farmed and wild salmon and sea trout
- **Genetic mixing** of farmed salmon and wild salmon
- The release of **organic and inorganic waste**
- Meeting increasing **feed** demands using sustainable sources
- Impacts on **cetaceans and seals**
- Unregulated harvesting of wild **cleaner fish**

Scotland should aim to become a **world leader in sustainable aquaculture** production and adopt methods of production that ensure the highest environmental management and design standards.

Growth of the salmon farming industry, using existing open-net practices, in the Trust's view cannot be achieved without exacerbating the impact on the marine environment.

The Trust will work with the industry, Government, and other stakeholders to help ensure salmon farming is **managed and regulated effectively**, and that **environmental sustainability** is at the core of future decision-making.

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What the Scottish Wildlife Trust would like to see:

- No further growth of activities using open-net practices, with exceptions made only for relocation or trialling new technology
- The development of an Aquaculture Planning Strategy
- A ban on new salmon farms in Marine Protected Areas containing protected features (species or habitat) that are at risk from salmon farming
- An incentives scheme that provides financial and logistical support to the salmon farming industry for the development and trialling of new technology, such as closed and semi-closed systems
- Stronger protection offered to wild salmon and sea trout populations
- A ban on seal shooting
- Better regulation of the use of acoustic deterrent devices, with the aim of phasing out their use
- A ban on wild-caught cleaner fish

¹Review of the Environmental Impacts of Salmon Farming in Scotland. Issue 1. Scottish Parliament Report, January 2018