

Stop Salmon Farm Expansion

OneKind Animal Advocates Campaign Briefing

OneKind Animal Advocates support OneKind's campaigns by writing to and lobbying key decision-makers. If you have any questions about Animal Advocates or want to get involved, we'd love to hear from you!

Please write to your MSPs, and the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity Fergus Ewing MSP and ask him to launch a review into animal welfare on Scotland's salmon farms, and in the interim call for a moratorium on the aquaculture industry's plans to double the industry by 2030.

1. What should I do?

In August 2018, OneKind released two reports on salmon farms. The first, *Fish welfare on Scotland's salmon farms*, exposed a number of animal welfare breaches including mass mortality, sea lice infestations, disease and escapes, and the second, *The welfare status of salmon farms and companies in Scotland*, highlighted the worst and best salmon farms for animal welfare in Scotland in 2017.

Following the publication of the reports, OneKind launched a petition to the Scottish Parliament with our partners Scottish Salmon Think-Tank, Save Seil Sound, and the Salmon Aquaculture Reform Network Scotland (SARNS) calling for a moratorium on plans to expand the salmon farming industry in Scotland until welfare and environmental concerns are addressed.

We need to show the Scottish Government that action must be taken to address the welfare and environmental problems on Scotland's salmon farms. You can play a key role in helping us to stop salmon suffering by writing, or sending emails, to your MSPs and/or the Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing MSP asking for a review into animal welfare on salmon farms and in the interim support a moratorium on plans to expand the salmon industry. Ideally your letters and emails should be in your own words, but below are some key points to make and a template letter that you can use.

If you live in Scotland

Please write to your MSPs. To find your MSPs and their contact details, simply use this link <http://www.parliament.scot/msps.aspx>, enter your postcode and click on the Find MSP button. You will see the full list of one constituency MSP and seven regional MSPs who represent you. Please write to or send an email to each one if you can. You can also call me if you want help identifying your MSP. Once you have done this, if you want to do more then please write to or email Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing MSP.

If you live outside Scotland

Please write to Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity Fergus Ewing MSP. Make sure you say why the welfare of Scotland's salmon is important to you.

2. Background

Scotland is the third largest producer of farmed salmon in the world. In 2016, there were 253 registered salmon farms in Scotland, which produced 35 million fish. Despite this, there are many welfare issues on salmon farms, including disease, sea lice and deformities. Of the 49 million salmon smolts put into sea-water farms in 2014, 26.7% (9 million) died during the production cycle, and in 2017 it is estimated that over 11 million salmon died prematurely on salmon farms in Scotland.

It is not just farmed salmon that are impacted by this industry: seals are shot (49 were shot in 2017), cetaceans such as harbour porpoise experience hearing loss and disturbance from the use of acoustic devices intended to deter seals; cleaner fish (wrasse and lumpsucker) placed on salmon farms to eat sea lice suffer from disease, aggression and high mortality rates; and declines in wild salmon and trout have been linked to salmon farming.

Despite these issues the salmon farming industry, supported by the Scottish Government, is committed to doubling the level of production by 2030, with new farms constantly being proposed, and existing farms expanding. We believe that expanding production without tackling key problems seriously compromises the welfare of farmed salmon and other animals.

3 Key points you might like to raise

- Salmon farms in Scotland can cause a number of welfare issues to farmed salmon, including:
 - **High mortality rates.** Of the 49 million salmon placed into sea-water farms in Scotland, 26.7% (9 million) died prematurely during the production cycle. In 2017, it is estimated that over 11 million salmon died.
 - **Exposure to disease and sea lice.** Sea lice are parasites that feed on the flesh, scales and skin of salmon, creating open wounds.
 - **Treatment** for sea lice and disease can also compromise the welfare of farmed fish, exposing them to handling, harsh surfaces and mechanical or chemical treatments.
 - **Escapes.** Escaped salmon are not well-adapted to the wild and can suffer. They can also interbreed with wild individuals, putting the welfare of wild salmon at risk.
- Salmon farming does not just negatively impact farmed salmon, but other animals too, including:
 - **Seals** are shot on salmon farms, in 2017, 49 seals were shot on salmon farms.
 - **Cetaceans** such as harbour porpoise are excluded from their habitat and can experience hearing damage from the use of acoustic devices intended to deter seals from salmon farms.
 - **Cleaner fish** (wrasse and lumpsucker) are used to eat sea lice from salmon but can experience high mortality rates, disease and aggression.
- Following their inquiry into the salmon farming industry, the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee, deemed "*the status quo is not an option*"
- Despite these problems, the salmon farming industry, backed by the Scottish Government, wants to double the value of the salmon farming industry in Scotland, with targets set to double production by 2030.

4 What to do next

Get writing! If you need any assistance or have any questions just get in touch. Once you have sent your emails and/or letters, please let me know. You can also send copies of any letters and responses you receive to sarah.moyes@onekind.org or Sarah Moyes, 50 Montrose Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 5DL.

MSP Letter template

Sarah Moyes
OneKind
50 Montrose Terrace
Edinburgh
EH7 5DL
sarah.moyes@onekind.org
0131 661 9734

Dear [first name] [second name] MSP,

I'm writing as one of your constituents to express my concern over the plans by the Scottish salmon farming industry, backed by the Scottish Government, to expand despite clear evidence of animal welfare and environmental issues.

I was shocked to learn about the welfare issues that can arise on salmon farms in Scotland, and that, despite the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (ECCLR) Committee stating that the "*status quo is not an option*" the industry is still aiming to double aquaculture production from 160,000 tonnes in 2016 to 350,000 tonnes in 2030.

While there are already many critics of the salmon farming industry with concerns about the environment, I want to draw your attention specifically to animal welfare. I believe that expanding the salmon farming industry without addressing welfare issues would be unsustainable and unethical. I hope that you will support our call for a review on animal welfare on Scotland's salmon farms, and in the interim a moratorium on industry expansion plans, on the following grounds:

1) The welfare of salmon - Salmon on farms are exposed to numerous factors that can compromise their welfare. These include: sea lice, disease, escapes and high mortality rates. Of the 49 million salmon placed into sea-water farms in 2014, 26.7% died prematurely during the production cycle.

2) The welfare of other animals - It is not just farmed salmon that suffer. Seals are shot, cetaceans such as harbour porpoise are excluded from their range and experience hearing damage from the use of acoustic devices intended to deter seals, cleaner fish used to eat sea lice experience high mortality rates, diseases and aggression, and declines in wild salmon and trout have been linked to salmon farming.

I believe that urgent action is needed to give these animals greater welfare protection.

I look forward to hearing back from you about your position on this issue and what action you will be taking to safeguard the welfare of Scotland's farmed salmon, and other animals impacted by the salmon farming industry.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Moyes

PS For further information about farmed salmon welfare, please see the detailed reports published by OneKind [here](#) and [here](#).

Cabinet Secretary Letter Template

Fergus Ewing MSP
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Sarah Moyes
OneKind
50 Montrose Terrace
Edinburgh
EH7 5DL
sarah.moyes@onekind.org
0131 661 9734

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I write to express my concern about the animal welfare issues increasingly being reported on salmon farms in Scotland. Salmon are sentient animals with the capacity to suffer and there are many welfare challenges endemic to the intensive farming systems that prevail in modern aquaculture. Despite this, I understand that the industry is still aiming to double production from 160,000 tonnes in 2016 to 350,000 tonnes in 2030, and that the Scottish Government supports this expansion.

I believe that expanding the salmon farming industry without addressing fish welfare issues will seriously harm farmed salmon and other animals, as well as the environment. As a matter of urgency, I ask you to establish a review of animal welfare on Scotland's salmon farms, and in the interim to support a moratorium on expansion.

My concerns include not only the welfare of salmon, which are exposed to sea lice infestations, poor survival in the wild following escapes, and high premature mortality, but also the welfare of other animals such as cleaner fish, seals and cetaceans. In my view, responsible rearing of livestock puts welfare high on the agenda and this year has seen too many examples of fish and other animals suffering in Scotland's aquaculture industry.

I look forward to hearing back from you about your position on this issue and what action you will be taking to safeguard the welfare of Scotland's farmed salmon, and other animals impacted by the salmon farming industry.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Moyes