

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY

COMMITTEE SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND

SUBMISSION FROM DOUGLAS CHIRNSIDE (Oyster farmer, commercial creel fisherman and scallop diver in and around the Sound of Jura (for 30 years))

Scottish Salmon Farming World View

United Nations figures show the current world population at 7.3 billion growing to 8.5 by 2030, 9.7 billion by 2050 and 11.2 billion by year 2100.

https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf

If we are to supply the growing world population with a sustainable source of protein we must farm the sea, wild fisheries will never meet this demand. Innovation in wild capture fisheries is reducing the overall biomass of capture species causing complex ecosystems to collapse.” 8% of wild fish caught globally is thrown back in to the sea. In most cases they are dead, dying or badly damaged. This is equal to almost 3 billion Atlantic salmon”

<http://www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en> (click on fish and seafood image)

Innovation in farmed fisheries such as Atlantic salmon will help reduce the demand on wild fisheries.

Innovations include-

Using food waste to grow Black soldier fly for protein in salmon feed. See: Protix.eu, [Insect-fed-salmon-press-release](#), February 6, 2018

Growing algae to substitute omega 3 oils from wild fish oil.

Source: [Feed navigator.com](http://Feednavigator.com), article ‘you are what you eat microalgae boosts omega 3 content of farmed salmon’ 08/03/2018.

Scotland has a duty, history and willingness in contributing to world issues such as this and can do so by farming Atlantic salmon.

Scottish Salmon Farming UK View

Scottish farmed salmon is the UK shopper’s most popular form of seafood.

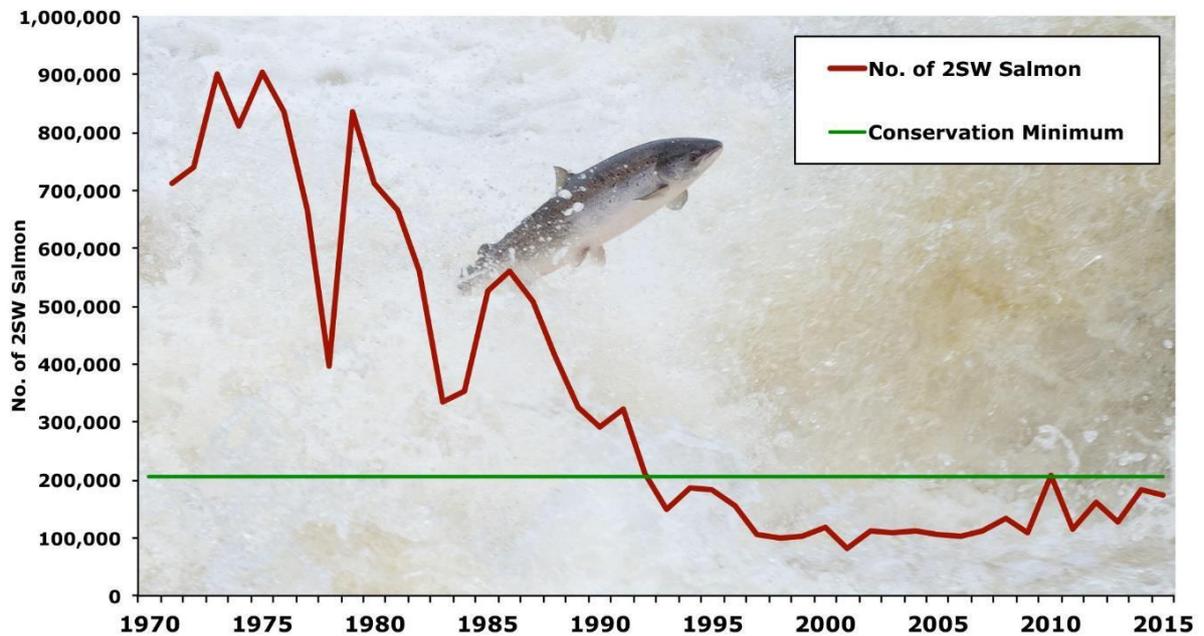
1 million smoked salmon meals are eaten in the UK every week.

Sales from fresh farmed salmon in 2016 reached £769.4 million.

From the 1970’s wild Atlantic salmon numbers have been declining around the coasts of Scotland and the rest of the UK/ Ireland.

This is mirrored on the East coasts of America and Canada

Pre-fishery Abundance - North America



UK/Ireland, East coast America and Canadian wild Atlantic salmon populations migrate to Greenland and the Faroes.

Greenland and Faroe Island net fisheries contributed to this decline as did UK net fisheries in 1960/70's

“Such was the salmon abundance at the time that huge commercial fisheries were being sustained at every point in the salmon’s migration at sea. At Greenland and Faroe, over 3000 tons of fish were caught at the peak of the fishery”

Source: [Atlantic salmon trust journal 2011. \(page 19\)](#)

Scotland produced 59,500 tons of farmed salmon for the domestic market (2017) in a sustainable way.

In reality farming the seas will always be more sustainable than boom and bust wild fisheries like salmon, cod or herring.

If salmon farming is in part responsible for the continued low numbers of wild salmon caught on Scotland’s west coast rivers I would argue this is a price worth paying.

Rural Economy and Reliance on Salmon Farming

Figures produced by Scottish Salmon Producers Association and Highlands and Islands Enterprise show huge investment in the rural economy, direct and secondary well-paid jobs total around 8000.

Funding for local community projects and social events are generously supported by

the industry.

See: [Scottish aquaculture a view towards 2030](#).

See: [Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation \(2017\) Scottish Farming Economic Report, November 2017](#)

Housing is always an issue in remote areas and the industry has come forward to support the building of new homes and infrastructure. The newly proposed fish farm on the Island of Rhum will be building accommodation for its workers this has also taken place on the nearby Island of Muck and Colonsay.

Impact of Brexit

I have concerns with the over reliance on the tourist industry in Scotland and the implications Brexit will have on increased costs to overseas visitors coming to our country. Other profitable industry's like salmon farming need to be there if tourist numbers fall. Equally the salmon farming industry has to be in a strong, profitable position to ride out the uncertainty that the Brexit process could cause.

Summary

I feel salmon farming to be a bit of a stinging nettle but none the less one which should be grabbed for all its positive points.

I have confidence in the industry to aim high and overcome these challenges which it needs to be able to if it is to expand and keep its image with consumers as a premium product

No terrestrial or marine farming practice can take place without some form of impact on the environment and innovation can only take place when company's make profits. With government agencies strapped for cash and the large sums of money needed to overcome the challenges in salmon farming it should and could only come from within the industry.

Douglas Chirnside
April 2018