

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND

SUBMISSION FROM GAME & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST (SCOTLAND)

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust undertakes fish research, centred around the Salmon & Trout Research Centre in East Stoke, Dorset. The Trust has been monitoring Atlantic salmon numbers in the River Frome at the site since 1973, creating one of the most comprehensive records of salmon movement in England and Wales. We work in collaboration with teams throughout Europe to study the global decline in salmon numbers.

We note the Salmon & Trout Conservation Scotland (S&TCS) recent submissions to both the ECCLR and REC Committees regarding the impact of Salmon Farming. We also note the subsequent ECCLR report. These contributions provide a succinct summary of the potential challenges facing both wild salmonids and the marine environment that emanate from fish farming on the west coast of Scotland. Other current submissions to RECC consider the inshore marine environment, the economic benefit and tourism impacts created by aquaculture. Salmon farming representatives point to decline in wild salmonid numbers over a long time. That makes it even more vital that there is a unified response to the 'additive' threats which can increase the impact on any species in decline.

Whatever the extent of evidence regarding impacts of sea lice, benthic pollution, treatment residues, diseases and introgression through fish farming, it represents a long catalogue of challenges alongside other fresh-water and marine threats. It therefore indicates that a far more precautionary approach should be adopted to help the fight to stabilise and recover wild salmonid populations. To that end, we share the view that this type of approach should be firmly embedded in the REC Committee's report on Salmon Farming in Scotland if both conservation of nature in Scotland and the sustainable development of Scotland's environment are to benefit.

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (Scotland)

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