

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

### **SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM ROY ROBINSON**

Admittedly I live in South Devon, but have been regularly visiting Sutherland and The Outer Isles for some 40+ years. Nowadays I visit a minimum of three times every year, totalling up to two months annually, using small hotels and spending about three thousand pounds each year on my fishing permits alone.

Recently it has been heart-breaking to see the general ambience and infrastructure deteriorating under the onslaught from NC500. But to those like myself whose prime interest is to fish for trout, sea trout and salmon in the finest landscape and rivers in Europe the problems with and on the roads simply pale into insignificance.

As for so many others ( and maybe especially those who admire the Far North West from afar ) it has been almost incomprehensible to witness the continuous and steady decline of salmon and sea trout in the rivers and the seeming lack of any will to address the obviously related issues. Specifically, the undeniable role of the open-net fish farms in the West of Scotland . They may not be the only cause of decline but it seems incredible that obvious causalities and conclusions have not been recognised and vigorously actioned. Six years ago the owner of a Tweed beat said to me that the problems of the West are “ because no major rivers flow in that direction” . So much for the Laxford , but I don't suppose anyone reads John Buchan anymore !

The recent report by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee can be seen as helpful, but only as part of a grander, wider and urgent process.

**Other than with on-land contained systems, please work to ensure there is no further expansion of farming activity and a curtailment and reduction of the net cage farms.**

If you are not personally convinced of the farm/ fish /decline correlation simply examine a map of Scotland with all the CL Classifications marked – and compare that with the fish farming distribution. Regular visiting anglers can all see it – and unfortunately some have helplessly watched it happening for over thirty years. Some will come no more.

Roy Robinson  
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