

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

SALMON FARMING IN SCOTLAND

SUBMISSION FROM THOMAS G BUCHANAN

I have fished for salmon and sea trout and brown trout for all of my life since pre primary school age with my father George Buchanan now sadly deceased. Before of the advent of all the salmon farms on the West Coast of Scotland in particular all of the rivers that I fished had healthy runs of salmon and all of the small burns in Argyll and further North right up the West coast of Scotland also had very plentiful stocks of sea trout which are virtually all now gone! When I first started fishing the River Orchy in 1967 even after the Awe barrage had not long been built the number through the Boreland fish lift was around 6,000 salmon per season. Since the fish farms the runs of wild salmon have been decimated and the salmon farms like Marine Harvest and many others have seemed to be able to do as they like with scant regard for the terrible damage that has affected what was once a healthy and Pristine environment in our country. The waste emanating from the millions of salmon close caged in out sea lochs in the West Coast of Scotland is a national scandal and is severely contaminating our coast lines and tests done on the shell fish are regularly flagging up that they are very often now unfit for human consumption.

These companies like Marine Harvest are doing what they want in our country because their own country Norway realise the dangers of the operations and have imposed much stricter rules applied to their Modus Operandi while our responsible people in our country have ignored all good advice and not imposed sensible safety precautions!

Also now that the sea lice infestations have reached a dangerous level and sometimes as much as 10 times the allowable level is breached no hard action is taken against them, when malpractices like this happens their operations should be closed down.

It is also my opinion that it is a very dirty industry with the amount of chemicals that are being introduced into the sea to try and resolve this problem that is of their own making with the sheer amount of salmon grouped closely together in the cages. All of the salmon rivers on the West Coast of Scotland are now category 3 and endangered as a result of the activities of the salmon farms there as it offers shelters conditions for the nets to operate with the added dangers of escapees entering the many small rivers that run into these bays and further damaging the wild salmon pool with integration. The main reason that the East coast rivers are more healthy in general is because the coastline is much flatter in its topography and does not lend itself to the same level of protection for working the fish farms.

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