

The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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As you will be aware in

As you will be aware, in 2018 the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee concluded its inquiry into Salmon Farming in Scotland with an extensive report which included a total 65 recommendations of where the sector should make improvements.

At the time of the inquiry, the sector appeared to be struggling to address the multiple challenges of controlling of sea lice, lowering fish mortality rates and reducing the sector's impact on the environment. Importantly, the committee was strongly of the view that the status quo in terms of regulation and enforcement was unacceptable, and that the bar needed to be raised by setting enhanced and more effective standards.

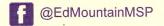
However, in the years since the inquiry, it would appear that the industry has been unable to address many of the issues raises in the REC Committee's report, especially the fish mortality rates which are increasing at an alarming rate. To illustrate this, I have provided a summary below of the mortality data, sourced from Aquaculture Scotland (link here):

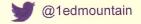
Year	Fish Farm Mortalities (kg)
2021	29,958,552
2020	27,368,508
2019	25,771,983
2018	16,573,210
2017	25,443,536
2016	22,239,861

These figures alone question whether enough progress is being made by salmon producers to ensure their farming methods are responsible, sustainable, and meeting the recommendations set out in the REC Committee's report.

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With that in mind, I wonder if it would be appropriate for the Rural Affairs, Islands and Natural Environment Committee to consider a review of the Salmon Farming industry's actions since 2018 as part of its upcoming work programme.

I would also like to make you aware of my entry in the register of interests, which show that I am a co-owner of a wild salmon fishery. The salmon fishery is on the River Spey, on the east coast of Scotland. The migration routes for smolts leaving the river and salmon returning to the river are along the east coast, where there is no significant salmon farming that could affect those fish. Thus, salmon farming has no impact on my registered interests as a salmon fishing proprietor.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Edward Mountain MSP

Representing the Highlands and Islands



