

4.6 million fish have already died on salmon farms so far in 2023

There's a reason why chefs have taken farmed salmon off the table...

UK, July 25, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There's a reason why chefs have taken farmed salmon [off the table](#).

Last week [WildFish](#) launched an international restaurant directory as part of its Off the table campaign, calling on all chefs and restaurants to take open-net farmed salmon off their menus.



Photo credit: Corin Smith

The directory highlights more than 100 chefs and restaurants from across the globe who do not serve open-net farmed salmon, due to its associated environmental, sustainability, and welfare issues.

“

Off the Table comes with a stark reminder to chefs and restaurants that they should use their power to support healthy coasts and communities, rather than propping up a polluting industry.”

*Beth Thoren, Patagonia, Inc
Director EMEA*

St John Restaurant in London and Michelin-starred Old Stamp House in Ambleside have both recently pledged support for the campaign, joining the likes of The Palmerston and Fhior in Edinburgh, Silo in Hackney, and Tim Maddams, former Head Chef of River Cottage.

“There is really no need for salmon farming,”

states Tim Maddams - chef, presenter, author, and industry expert -

“It's inefficient, misleading in its advertising, it's polluting, and it endangers the already massively threatened wild

salmon. There are plenty of better, tastier, and far more sustainable options.”

Since the introduction of open-net farms in Scotland in the 1970s, farmed salmon has negatively

impacted our environment, our marine ecosystems and fish welfare. In 2022, the Scottish salmon farming industry reported the death of 16.7 million fish on its farms

(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fish-health-inspectorate-mortality-information/>) – a figure that nearly doubled from the previous year, equivalent to 1 in 4 fish (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-fish-farm-production-survey-2021/pages/5/>). A closer look:

Mass production: intensive salmon farming creates a breeding ground for diseases and parasites. According to a WildFish report, in 2022, a single Scottish salmon farm can be infested with as many as 5 million parasitic sea lice at any one time

(<https://wildfish.org/latest-news/breaching-the-limits/>) – juvenile lice spread out from the farms, risking potentially fatal infestations in wild salmon and sea trout (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-of-information-relating-to-impacts-of-salmon-lice-from-fish-farms-on-wild-scottish-sea-trout-and-salmon/>)

Impact on wild fish: it's estimated that 440 wild fish are required as feed to produce one farmed salmon (https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/7452863/ciwf_rethinking-eu-aquaculture_online.pdf) OR around 2.5kg (wild-caught fish as feed) per 1kg (farmed salmon). The industry relies on wild fish such as wild herring, anchovies, and mackerel for this feed; 90% (<https://journals.plos.org/sustainabilitytransformation/article?id=10.1371/journal.pstr.0000005>) of which could be directly eaten by people.

Contamination: despite farmed salmon often being labelled as “responsibly produced”, the Scottish salmon farming industry is the only UK livestock industry to report increasing antibiotic usage trends (since data first published), according to the UK Veterinary Antibiotic Resistance and Sales Surveillance Report published in 2022

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1126450/FOR_PUBLICATION_-_UK-VARSS_2021_Main_Report_Final_v3_accessible.pdf). The industry also continues to use chemical pesticides, toxic to marine life, that can spread as far as 39km away from the farms (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0269749120302451>). According to an



Farmed Salmon



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analysis by Inside Scottish Salmon Feedlots, Scottish salmon farm waste is equivalent to the volume of sewage produced by half of Scotland – approximately 35,000 tonnes per year (<https://www.issf.org.uk/>).

More than 4.6 million fish (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fish-health-inspectorate-mortality-information/>) have already died on salmon farms so far in 2023; over one million fish more than during the same period in 2022. In May this year, salmon producer Loch Duart reported 76.8% of the fish had died on one of its farms (Loch Carnan) over the course of a production cycle (https://www.salmonscotland.co.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/may_2023.pdf)

According to HMRC export data, farmed salmon is currently the UK's largest food export; although the export value of the industry has decreased from £617m in 2019, to £614m in 2021, to £578m in 2022 (<https://www.fishfarmermagazine.com/news/salmon-still-uks-top-food-export-but-sales-are-down/>)

“Open-net farmed salmon has never been on the menu. If guests ask “why no salmon in a Scottish restaurant” we just need to mention the horrendous mortality rate in farms, the use of organophosphorus pesticide... But more and more guests are aware that it is just a really poor produce masquerading as a Scottish delicacy. There does not need to be an alternative to farmed salmon, our chefs at the Meikleour Arms create fantastic menus without it.”

advises Claire Mercer Nairne – owner of Meikleour Arms Hotel and Restaurant in Blairgowrie, Scotland.

Off the table is supported by 50 NGOs and community groups from within Scotland, across the UK and internationally, including Slow Food UK and Chile, Feedback, and Patagonia, as well as Booker Prize-winning author Richard Flanagan.

The campaign is also calling on restaurants and chefs to raise awareness of the detrimental impacts of open-net farmed salmon within the restaurant trade and the hospitality sector.

“There is a lack of transparency when it comes to farmed salmon and the negative health risks and environmental impacts. Chefs and restaurants, as leaders of the food industry, are the ones who drive trends, and they have a responsibility to understand the consequences of what they are endorsing as a “healthy and sustainable” choice. Off the Table comes with a stark reminder to chefs and restaurants that they should use their power to support healthy coasts and communities, rather than propping up a polluting industry.”

comments Beth Thoren - Patagonia, Inc Environmental Action & Initiatives Director EMEA – following the publication by Patagonia last week of The New Fish: The Truth about Farmed Salmon and the Consequences We Can No Longer Ignore written by Simen Saetre and Kjetil Ostli.

Dr Matt Palmer, Farmed Salmon Campaign Manager at WildFish, said:

“With high mortality rates, poor environmental impacts, and negative impacts on our wild fish populations, open-net farmed salmon has no place on a sustainable menu. It’s really encouraging to see the positive response we’ve had to our campaign from the hospitality sector so far. We look forward to working with more chefs and restaurants, and members of the public, to grow this movement in the coming months, and help us take open-net farmed salmon off the table.”

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