

11. Atlantic salmon sites in Scotland- EU Pilot 2094/11/ENVI

The Commission explained that issues concerning the management of fish farms and impacts on wild salmon were under active discussion with Ireland which is the other Member State with substantial salmon fish farm interests. It appears from these discussions that the Scottish authorities do not hold data of sea lice in fish farms even though the fish farms themselves are required to collect and keep such data. Discussions with Ireland have shown that the Irish carry out systematic checks on sea lice and keep reports of this data which are also publicly accessible. The Commission was wondering why Scotland did not do the same.

The UK explained that data of sea lice was not required to be provided regularly to the authorities, but only when there was an inspection, and indeed there was no central database. The Scottish authorities did not actively collect sea lice data.

The Commission explained that the key concern was the mortality of salmon in the marine environment. Whilst there appears to be agreement that this is a concern, there is no clear agreement as to the reasons for this as these have not been fully understood. There was however a study (provided to the UK before the meeting) whereby tagged salmon were released into the environment, some of which were treated for sea lice. Those treated for sea lice returned in far greater numbers than those not treated. Therefore, the Commission would like to know, given that there is a concern about return rates, how the Scottish authorities were assessing this.

The UK replied that there had been proposals for such work on returns, but the authorities were not aware of any actual work being undertaken. The Commission asked whether there was any structured approach in Scotland to address the problem of sea lice.

The UK authorities replied that whilst Scotland was building up data on this matter, they had yet to find a clear link between sea lice from fish farms and declining wild salmon returns. The Commission explained that Ireland had been concentrating on this problem and had found a certain link.

The UK authorities explained that they felt it was a multi-factoral problem and that they were looking at the relationship between wild and farmed fisheries. Work was done on containment and on enhancing the legislative regime and the fishing industries had a good code of practice. The UK authorities explained that St Andrew's University was undertaking assessments of the condition of returning fish.

Action Points: UK authorities to provide copy of assessment of Scottish salmon SACs when completed. Matter to be further considered by the Commission internally.

Minutes of Package Meeting of 24 January 2012

Commission participants [REDACTED] (ENV.A.2), [REDACTED] (ENV.A.2), [REDACTED] (Legal Service), [REDACTED] (ENV.B.3).

The Commission welcomed the timely provision of advanced written comments on the issues raised in the draft agenda of questions provided in December 2012. This helped to focus questions and it could be taken that all the submissions had been read.