



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01519

Name of petitioner

John F. Robins on behalf of Save Our Seals Fund

Petition title

Save Scotland's Seals

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to stop issuing licences permitting salmon farming, salmon netting and salmon angling interests to shoot and kill seals in Scottish waters and instead require that salmon farmers either move their farms into on-shore tank systems or legally require marine salmon farmers to install and maintain the high-strength, high tension predator exclusion nets they require to meet their legal obligation under the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 to protect their stock from the attention of predators. We further ask that the Scottish Parliament ask the Scottish Government to legislate to close down all salmon netting stations in Scottish waters thus allowing tens of thousands of Atlantic Salmon and sea trout to return to their native rivers to breed.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

We have written to the relevant Government Ministers and Marine Scotland on numerous occasions over the last four years asking them to stop licensing the killing of seals in Scotland and to make it illegal to kill seals. Sadly our requests have all been turned down and we now wish to show that there is public support for the end of legal seal killing in Scotland. We intend to contribute to the current fisheries review but we understand this is concentrating on issues raised by angling interests, many of which are pro seal shooting, and not very relevant to our campaign to end seal shooting.

Petition background information

Despite the fact that seals can be excluded from salmon farms by the use of high-strength, high tension predator exclusion nets the Scottish Government has refused to make these nets mandatory and has refused to stop issuing licences to shoot seals.

The link below shows that despite our requests the Government has not refused any of the applications to shoot seals in 2014 and has so far authorised the killing of up to 1005 seals. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/Licensing/SealLicensing>

You will also see from the licenses issued that most are for the protection of livestock (salmon in cages). It was myself who first drew to the attention of the Government that salmon in farm cages are covered by the provisions of the Animal Health & Welfare

(Scotland) Act 2006 and that farmers must protect their salmon from the attention of predators. However unless a farmer shoots every seal which comes close to the cage nets s/he cannot comply with the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. Due to weather and shooting conditions this is impossible. You can only do this by excluding seals using properly designed, installed and maintained exclusion nets or by farming the salmon in an on-shore tank system. Again the Government has refused to accept our case and continues to issue shooting licenses.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/sealshooting>

Related information for petition

<http://www.saveoursealsfund.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Our-Seals-Fund/325762894219736>

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

05 / 05 / 2014

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Circa 1,000 seals are shot and killed under Government Licence in Scotland each year. These deaths are totally unnecessary and an international embarrassment to Scotland. We would like to see Scotland lead the way with seal-friendly salmon farming using techniques such as on-shore farming in enclosed tank systems and proper predator exclusion nets around marine farms.