

Mairi Gougeon MSP/BPA
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform
and Islands



By email:
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C/O P O Box 679
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Your ref: 202300356896

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14 September 2023

Dear Minister Gougeon,

Action to prevent the Atlantic salmon becoming extinct in your waters

Thank you for your letter of 22 May in response to our letter of 4 May, asking what actions you will take to prevent the further loss and possible extinction of the iconic Atlantic salmon in your waters.

We note your intentions. However, such salmon action plans have been in place for some time, yet populations continue to decline. Furthermore, whilst many of the proposed actions might be the right ones, delivery is just too slow. We agree that part of this decline is due to decreased sea survival over which you have little control. However, this does not account for all of the decline. Up to 40% of the total decreased survival is occurring in freshwater. We are also deeply concerned about the impact of open net salmon farming in Scotland on the wild population.

As per our previous letter, time is not on our side, and we could see the extinction of the salmon in some of our rivers within the next 20 years. So we cannot afford to proceed with business as usual and we are pleased to note that steps are being taken to reprioritise the Salmon in your Wild Salmon Strategy. We hope that you will support this initiative and ensure that the necessary resources will be made available.

We will be monitoring progress with these and alongside scrutinising the manifestos of all political parties at the next election to see what priority is put on these important issues. The Westminster Government has set legally binding targets for environmental improvement by 2030. That is two parliaments away, so what happens in the next parliament is critical.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Bunt', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

David Bunt
Chief Executive Officer
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