

Dear ADD company (name to be inserted)

I am writing on behalf of the Salmon Aquaculture and Seal Working Group (SASWG), formed in 2010 to investigate the causes and find benign solutions to seal interactions with aquaculture and other sites.

The members of the SASWG are Freedom Foods; Humane Society International; Animal Rescue; Marine Harvest; Marine Scotland; RSPCA; Sainbury's; Scottish Natural Heritage; Scottish Salmon Company; Scottish Salmon Producer's Organisation; Seal Protection Action Group and the Sea Mammal Research Unit.

The aquaculture industry in particular has long employed Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) in order to limit potential seal depredation and damage. However, during our investigations and discussions the issue of potential ADD malfunction or failure has come to light and with it the potential for increased seal shootings as a result. We are also aware that it may be difficult for farm managers to be able to test for possible acoustic malfunctions and so take prompt remedial action in case of a fault.

Group members have been told that at present it is not possible to determine, either remotely or on site, if ADDs are fully functional in terms of their acoustic output, on a daily basis. This situation has potentially serious implications in terms of whether or not seals are shot to protect equipment and fish stock welfare.

A large proportion of aquaculture sites in Scotland are currently certified under the RSPCA's Freedom Food Scheme and the use of fully functional ADDs is a critical part of prevention strategies to deter seals. However, under existing laws for the protection of cetaceans, some sites seem unable to use such devices in their current form, and this may lead to seals being shot as a result.

With the above in mind, we would be grateful if you would kindly assist the group by answering the following questions:

1. What sorts of routine tests are made on ADD devices on site and how often?
2. How do you respond to any reported technical problems with ADDs on site and in what time-frame?
3. Is it possible to gather and record information about each transducer's operation or monitor functionality remotely?
4. Do you provide, or would you consider providing, ADD testing equipment on site for site managers or personnel to use?
5. Has your company considered or developed any 'cetacean -friendly' Acoustic Deterrent Systems?

I would be happy to discuss this further with you if you would like.

Yours faithfully

 (Chair of SASWG)