

Salmon Farming Public Consultation Summary

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1. Introduction

This consultation is being held to seek the views of the public on whether large-scale salmon farming should be allowed in Falkland Islands waters, and if so, at what scale. The options being put forward are:

- Option 1: No salmon farming in the Falkland Islands
- Option 2: Commercial salmon farming takes place and is limited only by the carrying capacity of the environment
- Option 3: Commercial salmon farming takes place but is limited well below the carrying capacity of the environment
- Option 4: Commercial salmon farming is allowed but through niche methods such as organic production

However consultees are invited to provide comments on other potential options not listed above as part of the consultation exercise and generally provide views on the subject matter.

Timing and Engagement Opportunities

This Falkland Island Government (FIG) consultation is in the form of an online survey, which will be made available on 7 August 2026. You will also be able to request a paper copy of the survey or any of the supporting documents by contacting salmonfarming@naturalresources.gov.fk.

The survey asks about your views on different aspects of salmon farming. Your opinions will be fed back to Executive Council as part of a report for decision on whether, in principle, to allow salmon farming or not, and if so, at what scale and under what conditions.

The consultation will run from 7 August to 30 October 2026. Prior to this there will be a series of public meetings and drop-in sessions between 27 July and 6 August.

Comprehensive Information Pack

Several supporting documents have been produced for the consultation to provide background information about salmon farming. These documents include:

- An independent report explaining carrying capacity and how it can be calculated.
- An independent report setting out the environmental impacts of salmon farming and the common mitigation measures.
- An independent socio-economic impact assessment of a potential salmon farming project in the Falkland Islands.
- An independent report summarising the current legislation on salmon farming in the Falkland Islands, describing how four comparator countries regulate the industry and making recommendations on what changes should be made to Falkland Islands legislation to create an appropriate regulatory framework if salmon farming were to be allowed.
- A report summarising the findings from a fact-finding trip to the Faroe Islands by FIG officers to look at how their government regulates the industry, as well as recommendations suggested by Faroese officials.
- A salmon farming project plan produced by Unity Marine (UM) to provide an example of what salmon farming could look like in the Falkland Islands. It is important to stress that the consultation is not on this project plan, but on whether in principle to allow salmon farming in Falkland Island waters.

This document provides a brief summary of each of these reports in the subsequent sections.

This consultation is only on the subject of sea-based salmon farming and does not affect other forms of aquaculture such as mussel farming or salmon farming on land or any other large scale fish farming.

2. Carrying capacity

Options 2 and 3 refer to the carrying capacity of the environment. Carrying capacity is the maximum level of activity – such as the total number/weight of salmon or amount of feed used – that a specific site or wider zone can support without causing unacceptable environmental damage. This is influenced by local conditions like water currents, seabed type, and farm layout, as well as broader environmental factors such as existing nutrient levels in the water.

Carrying capacity is considered from two angles – the depositional capacity of the potential sites of individual pens and farms – and the environmental capacity in a zone that may contain several farms. The two types are not interchangeable; an area may have a high depositional capacity but a low environmental capacity and vice versa. Therefore, both types of carrying capacity need to be taken into account when determining how much salmon farming can take place in an area.

Depositional carrying capacity is the ability of the seabed directly under the pens to absorb particulate organic waste such as uneaten food and faeces without creating an anoxic environment (where oxygen is depleted) on the seabed. This is affected by considerations such as the number and layout of cages, water depths and the speed of currents that would disperse the particulates.

Environmental carrying capacity is the ability of the body of water in an area to absorb dissolved nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus without creating algal blooms or eutrophication, which lead to oxygen depletion and affect biodiversity on the seabed. This is affected by considerations such as background nutrient levels, water volume, surface area and tidal flushing.

Depositional and environmental carrying capacities are calculated using computer models. For the purposes of the report prepared for the consultation (which looked at the example project plan provided by Unity Marine), the DEPOMOD model was used for the depositional modelling, while the Equilibrium Concentration Enhancement (ECE) model was used for environmental modelling, variations of which are used in the Scottish regulatory framework.

Together, these two types of model determine the maximum potential biomass of salmon that may be farmed in a local area (which would determine the number and location of pens) and a wider zone (which would determine the total number of farms possible in that zone).

In Scotland, applicants for salmon farming activities are required to model their proposals using NewDEPOMOD, a variant of the same model. The report on salmon farming legislation recommends that any new regulatory framework put in place in the Falkland Islands (if salmon farming were to be allowed) includes this type of modelling to determine how many farms may be located in a particular area.

A detailed explanation of carrying capacity and how it has been calculated for the purposes of the socio-economic impact assessment can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/3.-Carrying-capacity-report-1.pdf>

3. Environmental impacts and mitigations

Salmon farming has a range of potential environmental impacts. There are also mitigations to these impacts, which may be required by law or voluntarily implemented by industry. In many cases these mitigations will reduce the risks and impacts but may not entirely eliminate them.

Environmental impacts associated with salmon farming, as outlined in the environmental impacts and best practice mitigations report, include:

- Escapes from salmon pens, which may lead to the establishment of a local non-native salmon population in the wild or negative interactions with other species. These can be mitigated by using triploid (sterile) or single sex (all-female) salmon and by the use of predator netting.
- Interactions with marine mammals such as seals and sea lions. This may be mitigated by predator netting or acoustic deterrents. However, the mitigation measures may have negative impacts, such as risk of entanglement and noise pollution.
- Infectious diseases and their potential transfer to wild species. This can be mitigated by vaccination programmes, regular checks by veterinary professionals and spacing or zoning to reduce spread.
- Sea lice and their potential spread to wild species. This can be mitigated by having a threshold on lice populations, limiting production levels when there are issues and using non-chemical treatments such as cleaner fish or freshwater treatment.
- Discharge of chemicals and antibiotics, which may impact wild species and create immunity if overused. This can be mitigated by implementing controls on usage, vaccination programmes and use of feeds that have similar effects.
- Feed production, including overexploitation of other fish stocks. This can be mitigated by using certified feeds.
- Waste such as uneaten food and faeces, which affect the seabed and its ecosystem. This can be mitigated by limiting the number of pens in an area based on the capacity of currents to disperse particulate waste and carrying out regular surveys on the condition of the seabed. It is also important to understand the baseline condition of the seabed to determine the impact.
- Use of fresh water for the production of smolts (young salmon). This can be mitigated by using Recirculating Aquaculture Systems
- Impacts relating to the operation of farms, including energy and fuel use, noise and light pollution and other visual impacts.

The industry has developed various voluntary certifications and standards for farms to demonstrate they are mitigating environmental impacts. These include the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (the most commonly used), Global G.A.P Aquaculture and Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practices. Farms using these standards are independently audited to monitor their compliance with the standards' requirements although it is noted that not all providers will sign up to these voluntary schemes.

While considering these impacts, it is also important to compare them with the impacts of other forms of food production and with existing and other prospective industries, such as sheep farming, trawling and hydrocarbons extraction. For example, farmed salmon has a carbon footprint of around 5–6 kg CO₂ per kg, compared to 12kg for lamb and 30 kg for beef.

A report on environmental impacts and mitigations of the salmon farming industry has been prepared for this consultation, which takes into account comments received and concerns raised during the scoping exercise in November 2024. The report can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/2.-Environmental-impacts-and-best-practice-mitigations-report-1.pdf>

4. Socio-economic impacts

If salmon farming were to be allowed in the Falkland Islands, it would have social and economic impacts, both positive and negative. Modelling has been carried out, using Unity Marine's project proposals as a baseline. The modelling is primarily based on a potential industry producing around 30,000 tonnes per annum of salmon, but considers other production level scenarios.

The modelling in the report estimates that a 30,000 tonne/yr salmon farming industry would increase Falkland Islands GDP by around £30-35m per annum, an increase of around 11%. It could increase government revenue by around £20m per annum with around £6-8m coming from taxation and the remainder from licences and/or royalties depending on the regulatory framework created for the industry. It would create around 130 full time jobs, resulting in the immigration of around 140 people (with a higher number of jobs and immigration in the early years of the industry during the construction period) and may result in opportunities for upskilling and apprenticeships.

A salmon farming industry would provide economic diversification and resilience, something that is widely accepted to be needed in the Falkland Islands given our dependence on the fishing industry, which currently accounts for around 60% of gross domestic product.

However, there may also be negative impacts associated with the impacts identified above. The current near-full employment situation would mean an increased demand for labour, which could lead to wage inflation, negatively impacting existing businesses. Economic immigration has the potential to create further pressure on the housing market and drive up house prices and rents (the report estimates that a 30,000 tonnes/yr industry could require around 40 new homes to be built), as well as creating additional demand on public services such as education, health, waste disposal and electricity.

In the longer-term, there is the potential for growth by onshoring processing and in related sectors such as feed manufacturing. This has not been assessed in the analysis carried out to date, but would have similar impacts in terms of increasing GDP and government revenues and generating jobs. There is also the possibility of impacts on other sectors such as tourism and fishing, though there is significant uncertainty around these.

It may be possible to mitigate the negative impacts to some extent, for example by requiring companies applying to start salmon farming projects to build new housing for their prospective employees. This would largely depend on the Falkland Islands Government putting appropriate policies in place to mitigate the envisaged impacts.

A report on potential socio-economic impacts of a salmon farming industry in the Falkland Islands has been produced for the consultation using the proposal from Unity Marine as a basis for modelling the scale of impacts. It can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/5.-Socio-Economic-Impact-Assessment-1.pdf>

5. Regulatory framework

If salmon farming were to be allowed in the Falkland Islands, our current legislation on fish farming is not fit for purpose for regulating it and a new regulatory framework would need to be created. A report has been produced on our current legislation, looking at how other countries (Chile, the Faroe Islands, Norway and Scotland) regulate the industry, and making recommendations for a potential regulatory framework in the Falkland Islands should salmon farming be allowed.

The most relevant elements of our existing regulatory framework are the [Fish Farming Ordinance 2006](#) and the [Fishery Products Ordinance 2006](#). The Fish Farming Ordinance sets out matters including who can apply for fish farming licences, what supporting documents are required, what conditions can be imposed, enforcement and actions if the licence is breached, licence cancellations and terminations, and requires that fish farms have received planning permission under the Planning Ordinance 1991. The Fishery Products Ordinance allows for pollution controls to be introduced in controlled waters, requires licences to be obtained for discharging waste and has requirements on disease control.

The report summarises the regulatory frameworks in four other countries:

- **Scotland:** Scottish salmon farms have to go through a comprehensive application process and require planning permission from the local authority, a licence from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and an Aquaculture Production Business authorisation from the Marine Scotland Science Fish Health Inspectorate.
- **Faroe Islands:** The Faroes are considered by many to represent the gold standard of salmon production, having significantly overhauled its legislation since a series of Infectious Salmon Anaemia outbreaks in the early 2000s. Their framework has several key rules designed to limit the spread of disease.
- **Norway:** The Norwegian regulatory framework is based around a traffic light system, in which farms with a red light have to reduce their production limit and ones with green lights are allowed to increase it.
- **Chile:** The Chilean regulatory framework is based on the General Fisheries and Aquaculture Law and the industry is regulated by the Undersecretariat for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service and the Superintendency of the Environment.

The main recommendations from the report are:

- That a maximum harvestable biomass limit be set in law
- To require farms to use triploid (sterile) fish
- That the requirements of the new regulatory framework aligns with those of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council's salmon standard.
- To create marine zones, require an all-in, all-out approach and have significant fallow periods between production cycles to mitigate the risk posed by sea lice
- That a minimum smolt size of 400 grams is set, which would mean salmon could not be moved to cages until they weighed 400g.

The report can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/4.-Legislative-review-report-1.pdf>

In May 2025 FIG officers visited the Faroe Islands to look at how the Faroese government regulates its salmon farming industry, which accounts for around half of the country's GDP. This included meetings with the ministry responsible for salmon farming, the Environment Agency and the Food and Veterinary Authority, which are responsible for regulating the industry. A report summarising the findings can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/6.-Faroe-Islands-report-1.pdf>

6. Example project plan

Unity Marine have provided a plan for a potential salmon farming project in the Falkland Islands. This is included in the consultation documentation to give the public an idea of what a salmon farming development in the Falkland Islands might look like. The plan is presented only as an example; the consultation is on allowing sea-based salmon farming in principle, not specifically on Unity Marine's proposal. If a decision is made to allow salmon farming in principle, a new regulatory framework for salmon farming will be needed to be put in place.

The Plan proposes developing a salmon farming business with an annual production of 50,000 tonnes. It is envisaged that production would start three years after construction commences and steady state production could be achieved after five to eight years.

The Plan proposes using 16 sites around the coast of East Falkland (see right). Each would have ten pet pens and a feeding barge, with capacity for 5,000 tonnes of salmon at each location. Several more suitable sites have been identified that could be used to expand the business. In addition to the feed barges, there would be 25 work boats, a well boat and a supply vessel.

A headquarters would be established in Stanley and two service hubs would be based at Mare Harbour and New Haven, which would include hatcheries and veterinary facilities. The salmon would be harvested and processed at sea and feed would be imported from Chile. It is estimated that around 100 people would work in onshore operations (37 in Stanley, 26 in Mare Harbour and 28 in New Haven) and 100 in offshore operations. During the construction period there would be around 30 people required.

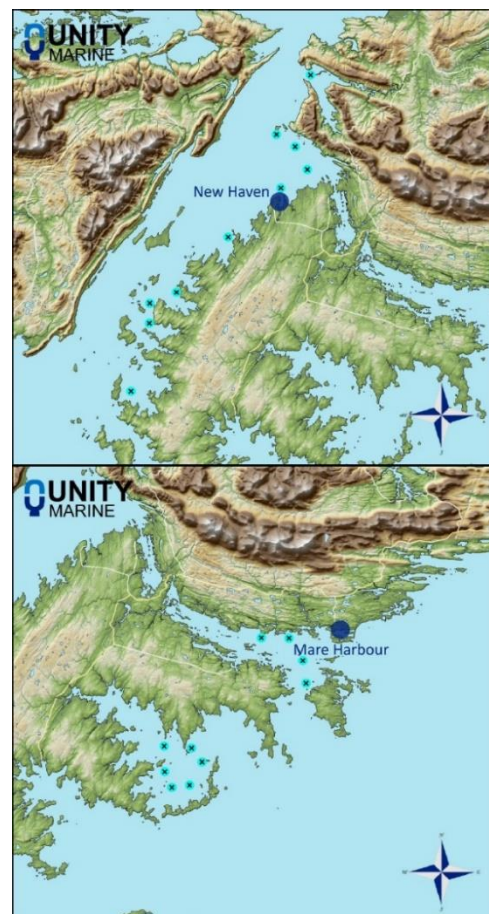
It is proposed that the business would operate in line with the Aquaculture Stewardship Council standard and other relevant international standards such as NS:9415 (technical requirements which aim to prevent escapes). Only sterile fish would be used, and egg batches would be screened for pathogens prior to being shipped to the Falkland Islands and disinfected upon arrival.

The Plan includes several appendices setting out various aspects of the project in detail, including:

- Environmental considerations
- Socio-economic impact considerations
- Land-based site investigations
- Fresh water sampling
- Site suitability
- A cruise report from SAERI
- Wave and currents study
- Details of power facilities, service vessels and sea site equipment
- A business plan and a list of procedures
- Policy considerations

The project plan and its appendices can be found at: <https://www.gov.fk/fisheries/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2026/06/7.-Unity-Marine-project-description.pdf>

A response to the plan by FIG can be found in appendix 1.



7. Glossary

Aquaculture

The farming of aquatic organisms such as fish, shellfish and seaweed. It involves interventions like stocking, feeding, and protection from predators.

Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)

An independent organisation that sets environmental and social standards for responsible aquaculture. Certified farms are audited against these standards.

Biomass (Harvestable Biomass)

The total weight of fish (salmon) that can be grown at a farm or within a zone. Regulatory frameworks often set maximum biomass limits to control environmental impacts.

Carrying Capacity

The maximum level of salmon farming activity that an area can support without unacceptable environmental harm.

Two key types:

- **Depositional carrying capacity** – how much solid waste (e.g., faeces, uneaten feed) the seabed beneath farming pens can absorb.
- **Environmental carrying capacity** – how much dissolved waste (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus) the wider water body can absorb without ecological damage.

Cleaner Fish

Fish used to remove sea lice from farmed salmon as a non-chemical treatment.

Depomod / NewDEPOMOD

Computer models used to predict how solid waste from salmon farms disperses and settles on the seabed.

Eutrophication

A process where excessive nutrients in a water body lead to algal blooms and oxygen depletion, harming marine life.

Equilibrium Concentration Enhancement (ECE) Model

A modelling tool that estimates how dissolved nutrients from salmon farms increase in surrounding waters.

Escapes

When farmed salmon escape from pens into the wild. Can lead to interactions with wild species or establishment of non-native populations.

Fallowing

A disease-control measure where farming sites are left empty between production cycles to allow ecosystems to recover.

Fish Farming Ordinance 2006

Falkland Islands legislation governing licensing, conditions, enforcement and cancellation of fish farming operations.

Fishery Products Ordinance 2006

Legislation relating to pollution controls, waste discharge licences and disease control for fishery products.

G.A.P / Global G.A.P Aquaculture

A global certification scheme covering food safety, environmental sustainability and animal welfare for aquaculture producers.

Infectious Salmon Anaemia (ISA)

A viral disease affecting salmon. Past outbreaks have shaped strict regulations in countries like the Faroe Islands and Chile.

Licences/Royalties

Payments made by companies to government for permission to use water space, natural resources or operate fish farming activities.

Organic Aquaculture

Production of farmed fish using organic principles, including strict environmental standards, reduced stocking densities and restrictions on chemical treatments.

Particulate Organic Waste

Solid waste produced by salmon farms, including faeces and uneaten feed, which settles on the seabed.

Predator Netting

Net structures placed around salmon pens to prevent seals, sea lions and birds from entering. Can reduce escapes but may have environmental drawbacks.

Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS)

Land-based systems that recycle water to produce smolts while reducing freshwater use.

Sea Lice

Marine parasites that can infect both farmed and wild salmon. Controlled through thresholds, cleaner fish, freshwater treatments and fallow cycles.

Smolt

A young salmon that has developed the ability to survive in seawater. Minimum smolt sizes may be set in regulations.

Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

A study evaluating how a proposed industry may affect employment, population growth, GDP, public services, and other economic and social factors.

Triploid Salmon

Sterile salmon bred to prevent escaped farmed fish from breeding with wild populations.

Zoning

Dividing marine areas into management zones to control disease spread, set biomass limits and determine farm spacing.

Appendix 1: FIG response letter



Directorate of Natural Resources

Bypass Road, Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Tel: 27260

Email: jwilson@naturalresources.gov.fk



4th March 2026

Dear Unity Marine,

Re: FIG Response to Unity Marine Project Plan

Thank you for providing the project description and associated appendices outlining how, in your view, a potential salmon farming project in the Falkland Islands may operate.

The project description will be used in the consultation for purely illustrative purposes, i.e. to illustrate a proposal which industry might seek to put forward in the future. As such, the Falkland Islands Government (FIG) has not assessed the specifics of the project plan, nor does it provide any comment on the validity of the assumptions contained within it. This includes, but is not limited to, assumptions relating to carrying capacity, production costs, market behaviour, or any other commercial or operational projections. These materials are being shared solely to give the public an example of what a salmon farming project might look like in practice, in order to aid their understanding and engagement during the consultation process. FIG does not endorse the assumptions underlying Unity Marine's project description.

As the Falkland Islands does not yet have a comprehensive regulatory environment for salmon farming, it is inappropriate for FIG to now review or comment on the documents as if they were part of a formal application. The documents do not constitute an application for approval, nor have they been prepared within an established regulatory process.

If, following the consultation, the Executive Council decision is to allow salmon farming, FIG would first need to develop and adopt a complete regulatory framework before any applications could be accepted for formal review. Such a framework may require, among other things, detailed environmental impact assessments and socio-economic impact assessments related to specific projects. Any future applications would be reviewed and verified by FIG and external experts as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J Wilson'.

James Wilson
Director of Natural Resources
Falkland Islands Government