

PRESS RELEASE BY E-MAIL FROM: John F. Robins, Campaigns Consultant, Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel. 01389-841-111, Mobile: 07721-605521.  
E-MAIL: [animals@jfrobin.force9.co.uk](mailto:animals@jfrobin.force9.co.uk) website: <http://www.animalconcern.org/>

ISSUED NOON Saturday 10 October 2015

Animal Concern has asked the Scottish Government to substantiate official figures just issued for the number of seals shot in Scottish waters in the first half of this year. Fishery and aquaculture interests had asked for permission to shoot 1,531 seals this year and the Scottish Government permitted the shooting of 839 animals. Statistics published on the Government website show only 110 seals were shot in the first 6 months of the year. The Government does not monitor seal shooting and relies on the shooters themselves to tell them how many animals they kill.

John Robins of Animal Concern said;

“Seal shooters claim to have killed only a tiny fraction of the number of seals they requested permission to shoot. I’ve asked the Government to tell me how they can validate the accuracy of these figures.

Shooting seals reflects badly on the companies doing it and the fewer they are seen to be shooting the better for them. Shoppers don’t want to pay for bullets to shoot seals when they buy Scottish salmon.

I don’t think an honesty box system is an appropriate or reliable way of recording how many seals have been shot. In Canada the Government has a fleet of boats and fishery officers who inspect and monitor salmon farms. We don’t have anything like that in Scotland unless there is a fleet of Government patrol boats hidden on Hogganfield Loch.

Only around 13% of Scottish salmon farmers use proper predator exclusion nets yet far more than 13% of the farms claim they did not shoot any seals in the first six months of the year.

When the seal shooting licensing system was being drafted I asked that any shooting be carried out by Government marksmen and not by private individuals. I still think that would be a far better system than the one we have now. Better still the Government could make all salmon farms use predator exclusion nets and totally ban the shooting of seals.”

Editor’s note; our e-mail to the Environment Minister is copied below. It contains a link to the Government stats on seal shooting.

**From:** JFRobins [<mailto:john@jfrobin.force9.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 10 October 2015 10:57  
**To:** ANY SCOTTISH MINISTER ([scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))  
**Cc:** Richard Lochhead MSP ([Richard.Lochhead.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:Richard.Lochhead.msp@scottish.parliament.uk))  
**Subject:** Numbers of seals shot under licence

E-MAIL FROM: John F. Robins, Campaigns Consultant, Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel: 01389-841-639, Mobile: 07721-605521. Animal Concern incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which has been Campaigning for animals since 1876  
E-MAIL:[animals@jfrobin.force9.co.uk](mailto:animals@jfrobin.force9.co.uk) website: <http://www.animalconcern.org/>

Dr. Aileen McLeod MSP,  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform,  
St Andrew's House,  
Regent Road,  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,

The number of seals shot in Scotland under Government Licence during the first half of this year has just been published on the [Scottish Government website](#)

People holding Scottish Government licenses to shoot seals asked for permission to kill 1531 seals this year and the Scottish Government gave permission for the killing of up to 839 seals.

Given the above figures I would have expected 420 seals or more to have been shot in the first six months of the year. Thankfully only 110 were reported as killed.

The number killed so far is only around 8% of the number the shooters asked to kill over the whole year and only 13% of the numbers permitted to be shot during 2015.

This huge anomaly between numbers sought, sanctioned and shot leaves me confused.

Can you tell me how the Scottish Government monitors the shooting of seals under the licensing scheme and how confident you are in the accuracy of the figures published on your website?

Yours sincerely,

John F. Robins,  
Animal Concern