

For Immediate Release: Eastern Shore Residents Report that Dead Fish Continue to Be Removed from Fish Farm in Owl's Head near Ship Harbour. Province Confirms Veterinarian Sent to the Site.

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People who live near a salmon fish farm at Owl's Head on the Eastern Shore continue to report an unusual amount of activity at the site, including a long oil slick and the removal of truckloads of dead fish.

According to Shane Borthwick of Snow Island Salmon, Inc., a subsidiary of Loch Duart of Scotland, the majority of the 475,000 salmon contained in 24 pens off of Owl's Head, near Ship Harbour, are "doing fine." He blames "harsh winter conditions" for some deaths.

Locals watching the site, however, believe that the salmon farm is facing more serious challenges. Over the course of a number of days, they have photographed divers filling large lined Xactic boxes on barges, which are then loaded onto trucks for processing at SE Rendering in Canning.

"I haven't seen any live fish activity on the site," reports Bill Williams, a retired fireman. "I had been watching from the land, but went out to the site by boat on Tuesday, February 26. We observed a massive oily slick on top of the water coming from the cages. There was also a very bad smell. Both of these things would indicate a number of dead and decaying fish on the sea floor."

"Fish associate the noise of boats with food," Williams said. "Normally, when you go out there in a boat, they would come to the surface and jump around with the expectation of being fed. During the past 7 days I have seen no evidence of feed being taken to or distributed on the site. The last load of food delivered to the yard is still sitting there, unopened although the water is clear of ice."

Williams confirmed that he had observed, "since Saturday February 23, large numbers of boxes of dead fish being loaded onto tractor trailers labeled SE Rendering at Owl's Head at the wharf."

"I don't think these are normal weather-related losses. Have these fish died of quick-chill, or of some disease? I was on a seiner that pumped dead and dying fish out of this site in 2009. This is not a good place to be farming fish."

According to Leo Muise, Executive Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Dr. Amanda Swim, a provincial fish veterinarian was out on the site taking samples yesterday, 28 February 2013.

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