

Scottish Government updates

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Livestock exports

Calf exports from Scotland
via Ireland ceased 2018

Calf exports via English
Channel ceased 2019



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The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Act 2024

- prohibits the export of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and equines for slaughter, or fattening for slaughter
- applies to exports from or through GB to countries outside British Islands
- offence to send, transport, or organise journeys, or attempt these
- Came into force July 2024



Scotland in the UK



- Part of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Separate legal system
- Animal health and welfare are devolved to the Scottish Parliament
- British Islands are UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands



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Draft Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Enforcement Regulations 2024

- Coming into force January 2025
- Hold notices
- Withdrawal of Journey Logs
- Revocation of Transporter Authorisations
- APHA/industry verified pre-export checks for livestock journey logs
- Further co-design work with equine sector



Catching of poultry

- Over 1 Billion birds per year transported for slaughter in the UK

Farming

Labour to legalise harmful practice of carrying chickens by legs, say charities

Government accused of 'shocking' choice to dilute protection standards in first animal welfare policy

Haroon Siddique
Legal affairs correspondent
Fri 18 Oct 2024 13:00 BST

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📷 A farm calculated that the additional cost of handling chickens upright was £0.0003 per egg.
Photograph: Ian Hinchliffe/Alamy



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COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1/2005

- Article 2 (a) *'animals' means live vertebrate animals*
- Annex 1 Chapter 3 1.8. *It shall be prohibited to...lift or drag the animals by head, ears, horns, **legs**, tail or fleece, or handle them in such a way as to cause them unnecessary pain or suffering*





Guide to good practices for the transport of poultry

2017



For more information:
www.animaltransportguides.eu



97. Catching teams should apply good handling behaviours. They should move slowly, silently and steadily through the flock and avoid making fast. People who catch the birds should be well positioned in the poultry house. They should not catch animals far from the container. Special care should be taken when placing birds in the upper layer.
98. Birds should be caught and carried in such a way there is no damage to either wings or legs.
99. Birds should **not** be caught and carried by the neck and should not hit any object whilst they are carried.
100. Broilers may be caught by one leg but if they have to be carried, their bodies have to be supported to minimize the risk of injuries.
101. End-of-lay hens can be caught by one leg if two legs is not practical, but in both cases, the animals have to be supported under the breast / abdominal region to minimize injuries.
102. If broiler chickens are loaded by hand, up to 5 chickens of less than 2 kg per bird are carried in one hand and up to 3 chickens when they are heavier than 2 kg. The other hand is used to support the body weight.
103. The method of catching turkeys by hand should take into account the weight and size of the birds, and be adjusted accordingly. Specifically:
 - Birds weighing less than 10 kg should be caught and carried by both legs with no more than 1 bird in each hand; birds must be placed in the container one at a time;
 - Birds weighing 10 kg and over should be caught and carried individually by grasping the shoulder of the wing furthest away from the catcher, whilst using the other hand to hold both legs.
104. Birds must be lifted and held close to the body and placed into the container with care.



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EU guidance – better practice



© Eyes on Animals



© Eyes on Animals



© GTC Agricultural

Figure 3.2 Illustration pictures for Better practices beyond EU legislation for handling of animals during loading



Scottish Government Guidance – laying hens

“The Humane Slaughter Association's guidance on Poultry Catching and Handling recommends that birds be carried individually, upright, and held around the body and wings.

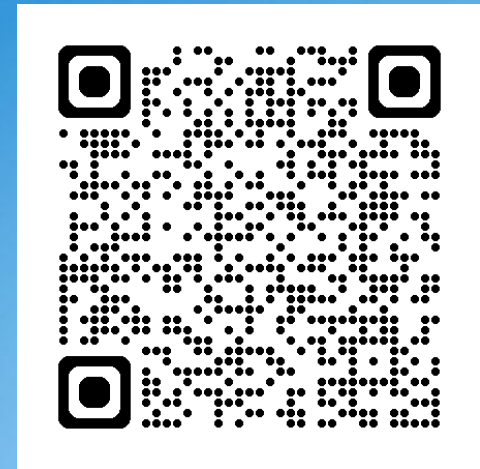
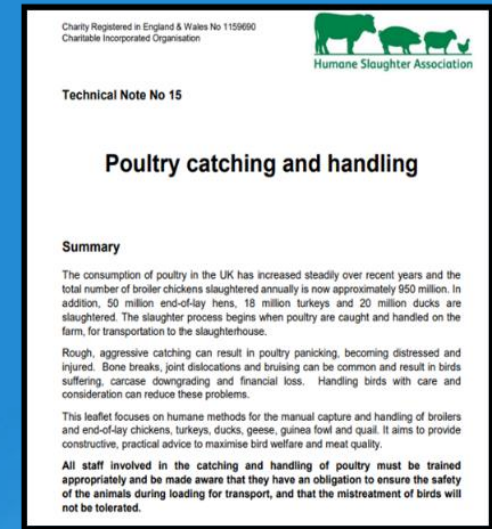
This is best practice and should be adopted wherever possible. If, for any reason, it is necessary to carry the birds in another way, birds **may** be carried by the legs. In that case they **must** be held by both legs, The number of hens carried will depend upon the size of the hen and the ability of the carrier, but a maximum of three per hand **must not** be exceeded.”



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HSA Guidance

“However, the HSA acknowledges that upright, individual handling is not always practical in large-scale commercial environments where typically more than one bird is carried in each hand. For example, the majority of broiler chickens may be caught/held by only one leg. If a person needs to carry multiple chickens at once, the HSA suggests that, to avoid injury and birds suffering, good practice is to catch and carry a chicken by both legs. The HSA recognises this recommendation may cause considerable economic challenges but urges the industry, worldwide, to explore ways of moving towards the change”



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EonA Dutch catching method - instructions

Pick up the chickens around their chest and wings, holding them upright.
No more than two at the time.



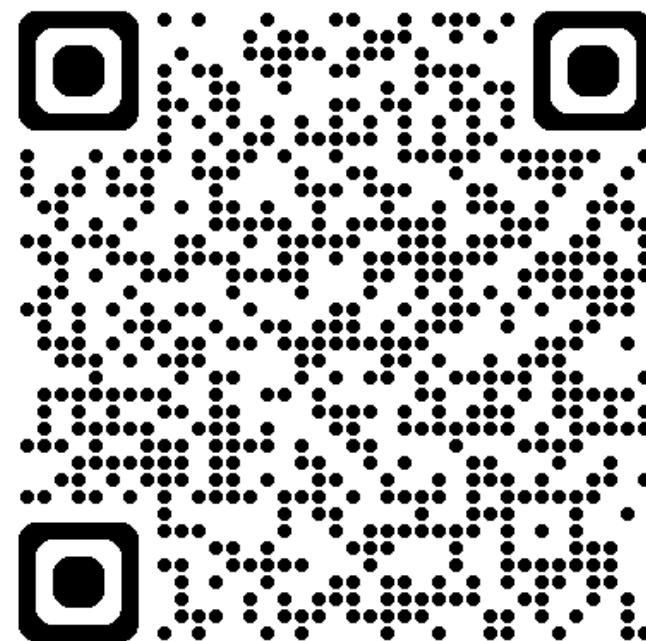
Is the chicken located in the back or underneath the rack?
Grab both legs with one hand; place your other hand underneath the chest.
Gently pull the chicken towards you while supporting the chest.



[*** CLICK HERE FOR AN INSTRUCTION VIDEO](#)



Fig. 1. Comparison of corticosterone stress response in spent hens to normal (rough) and gentle handling.



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Industry view

“Current estimates are that it would take between four and six times as long to catch and move pullets and hens as compared to catching by the legs. This means that the costs of moving pullets, vaccinating and treating pullets and hens, and catching at end of lay will increase by a factor of 4 to 6

As has been well reported in many industries, there is a shortage of labour and this is already been felt severely by farmers, pullet rearers, end of lay processors and catching gangs”

(BFREPA website April 2024)



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AWC Opinion on the welfare implications of different methods and systems for the catching, carrying, collecting and loading of poultry

- Manual catching and carrying
- Mechanised collection
- Housing
- Container systems
- Reporting and enforcement
- Update Welfare Codes (England and Wales) and Guidance (Scotland)



AWC Recommendation

- Retained Council Regulation 1/2005 should be amended so that, for a period of five years, it is legally permitted to lift chickens, and turkeys weighing less than 10 kg, by 2 legs.
- Subject to review of scientific evidence



Catching teams

J. Wessel, E. Rauch, S. Hartmannsgruber, M. Erhard,
P. Schmidt, B. Schade, H. Louton
A comparison of two manual catching methods of
broiler considering injuries and behavior
Poult. Sci., 101 (2022), Article 102127

FSA Review of the poultry catching industry
in England and Wales

(ADAS 2006)

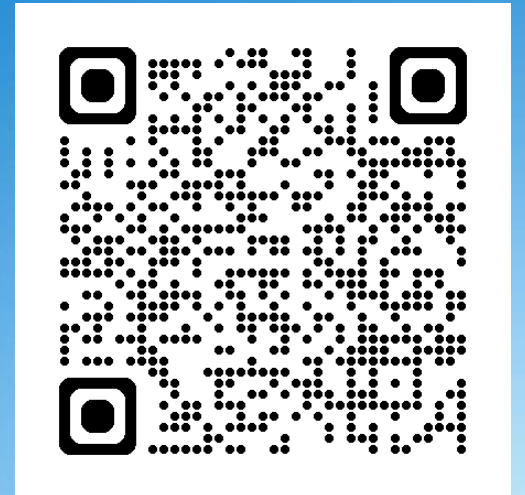
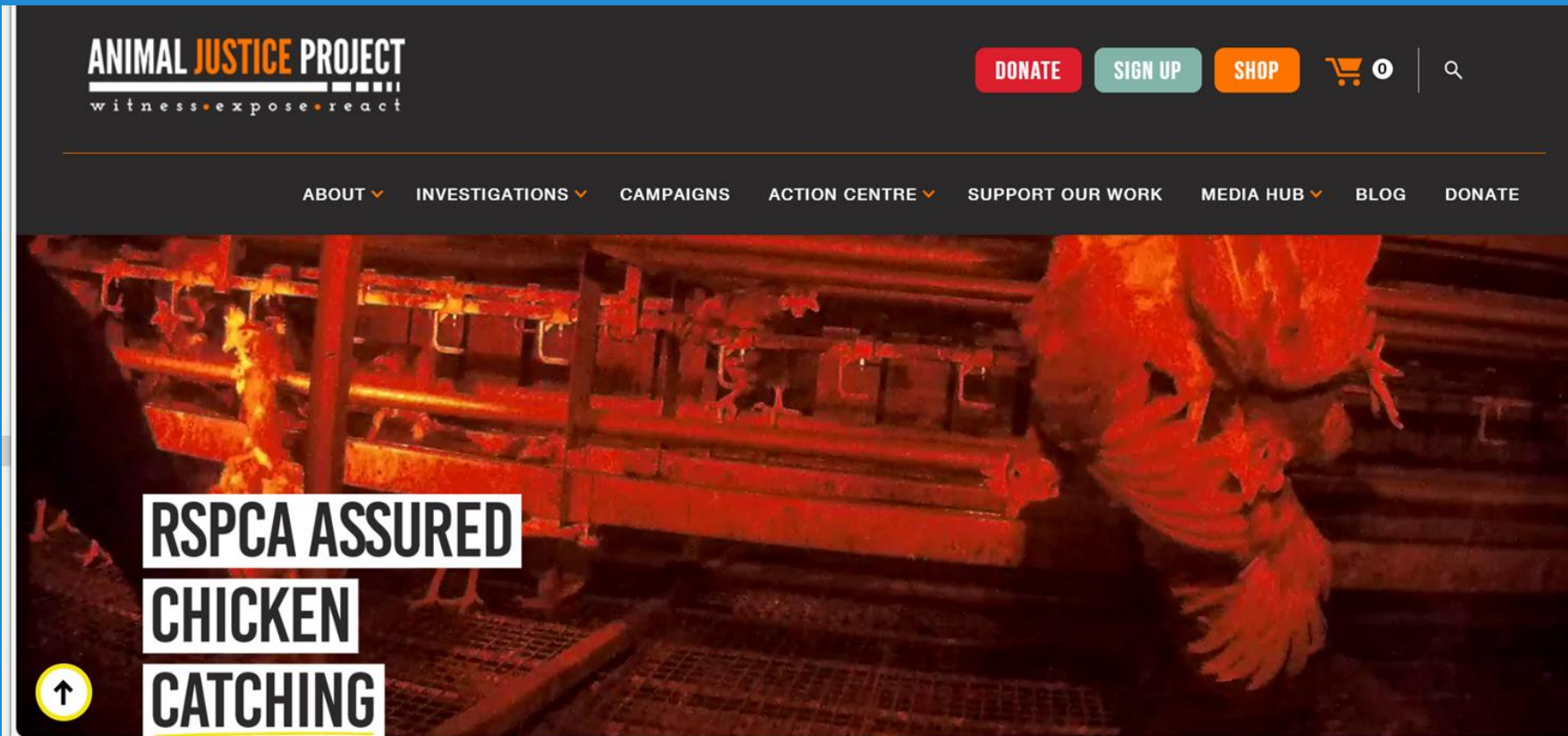
The welfare effects of different methods of
depopulation on laying hens. - AW0231
(defra.gov.uk)

(SAC 2006)



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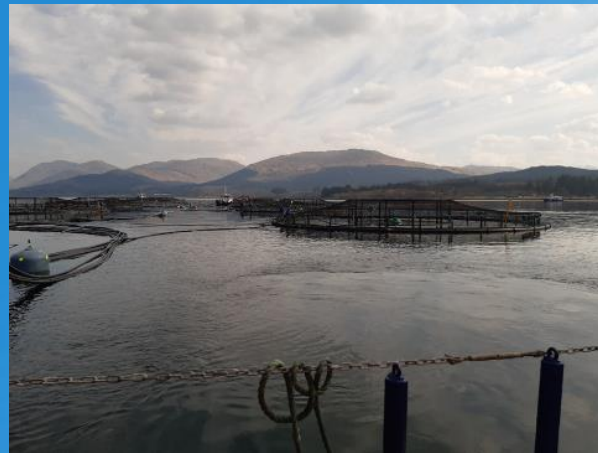
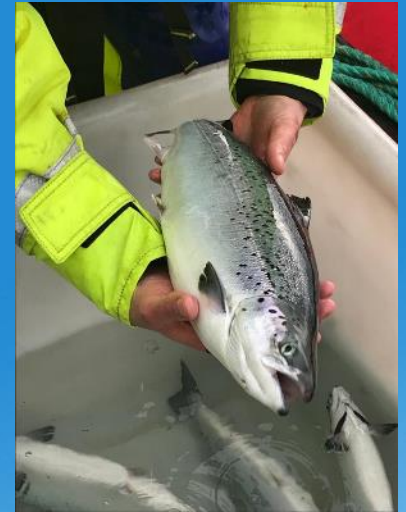
Undercover footage



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Farmed salmon killing guidance

- Scottish salmon largest UK food export
- 220 sites
- Freshwater production of smolts
- Smolts put to sea for up to 2 years (55M in 2022)
- Cleaner fish – wrasse and lumpsuckers



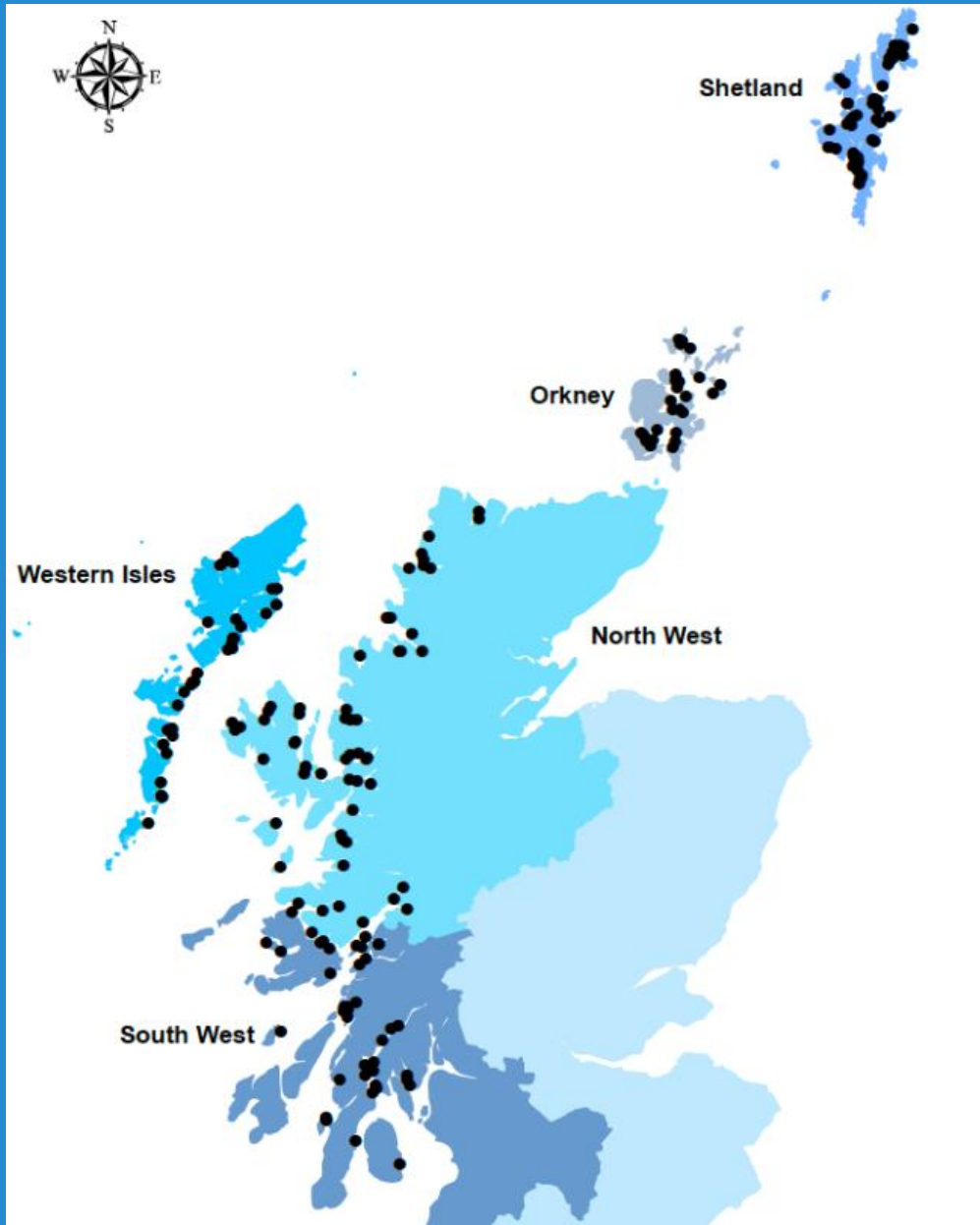
Farmed salmon killing methods

- Mechanical percussive stunning followed by bleeding
- Electrical stunning
- Anaesthetic overdose

Unacceptable and no longer used:

- Asphyxiation in air
- CO2 saturated water
- Ice slurry +/- CO2
- Conscious bleeding





Salmon farming sites in Scotland



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Well boats/Harvest vessels

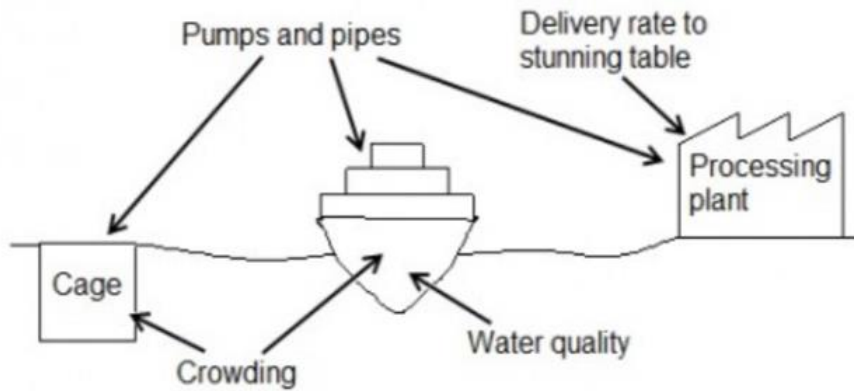


Figure 6: Potential stressors when using a wellboat



Effective stunning

Humane Harvesting of Fish

Effective Percussive Stunning

Amongst other things, an effective stun is dependent on the blow being administered to the correct part of the skull. To ensure the maximum impact on the brain, the best position is where the brain is closest to the surface of the head and where the skull is thinnest. In salmon and trout this found directly above and slightly behind the eyes (figure 10). The blow does not have to penetrate the head to be effective.

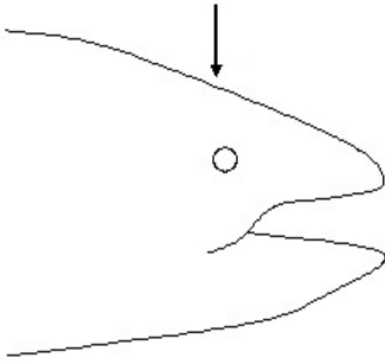


Figure 10: Position for effective percussive stunning of salmon and trout

The most reliable and effective signs of recovery for salmon and trout are the return of the eye roll reflex (Figure 11) and the breathing reflex. Rhythmic movement of the operculum should be looked for, but take into account that apparently random and irregular movements can be, but are not usually, a sign of recovery.

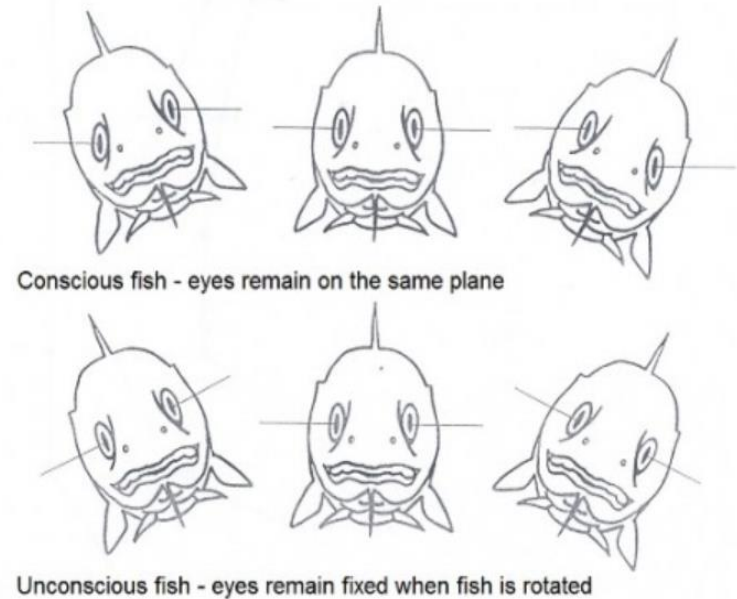


Figure 11: Signs of recover in fish - the eye roll reflex¹

¹ Adapted from 'Protocol for assessing brain function in fish and the effectiveness of methods to stun and kill them'. SC Kestin, JW van de Vis, DHF Robb. *The Veterinary Record*, March 9 2002.



Electrical stunning



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Current legislation – farmed fish

- EC Regulation 1099/2009 - *“Animals should be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations”* but no detailed requirements for fish
- Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006
- Industry Code of Good Practice
- RSPCA assurance standards



FAWC/AWC recommendations 2014 updated 2023

- Transport
- Handling
- Methods of killing
- Training and competence
- CCTV
- Specific UK legislation, with proportionate inspection, enforcement powers and penalties



Developing Scottish Government Guidance

- Based on AWC recommendations
- Will cover transport, killing for human consumption, disease control, cleaner fish and by-catch
- Training and competence, technical equipment specifications, oversight/auditing
- Similar work commenced for GB trout sector

