

MORE THAN 80 GROUPS WORLDWIDE DEMAND FARMED SALMON ACCREDITATIONS STOP GREENWASHING THE EXTINCTION OF THE MAUGEAN SKATE

Shoppers being misled by eco-certifications on Macquarie Harbour farmed salmon

For immediate release 25th July 2023

More than 80 organisations from around the globe are calling for the accreditation schemes, [Best Aquaculture Practices](#) and [GlobalG.A.P.](#), to immediately revoke their 'sustainability' certifications from farmed salmon and trout raised in waters adjacent to the World Heritage Area, Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania.

The demand comes as federal and state government workshops are held in Hobart **this week** to decide on urgent action to prevent the extinction of the Maugean skate – a rare animal related to sharks and dating back to the time of dinosaurs.

Despite scientific evidence that industrial fish farms in Macquarie Harbour are having a major impact on the waterway's health and skate numbers, all three salmon farming companies operating in the harbour are certified as "environmentally responsible" by BAP or GlobalG.A.P.

Signatories from 17 countries have sent open letters to both schemes demanding withdrawal of certification, condemning the misleading of unsuspecting shoppers, and calling for an end to greenwashing the extinction of the prehistoric skate.

The signatories include marine, shark conservation, animal welfare, and community groups, as well as independent scientists, a public policy think tank, and award-winning authors.

Found only in Macquarie Harbour, the endangered Maugean Skate is one of the listed natural values of the World Heritage Area.

Scientists from the University of Tasmania's Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies renewed their alarm recently after reporting a dramatic collapse in Maugean skate numbers with almost half disappearing in less than seven years.

The scientists attribute the Maugean skate's decline to the degraded environmental conditions in the Harbour, particularly dissolved oxygen levels, and explicitly named fish farms as one of the main causes of low dissolved oxygen levels in Macquarie Harbour.

Quotes:

"Major supermarkets rely on these certifications to sell farmed salmon and ocean trout with their "responsibly sourced" logos as part of their sustainable seafood policies. But there is nothing responsible about driving one of the rarest skate species in the world to extinction." - **Kelly Roebuck, SeaChoice**

"This is certified ecocide. The Maugean Skate has one critical habitat, one chance at survival, the science is there, and the urgent action that is required to save this animal is

*simply not happening. Instead, we have greenwashing.” - **Jessica Coughlan, Neighbours of Fish Farms***

*“These certifications must not shirk their responsibility here. They cannot palm this off to the auditors or wait until the companies’ next audit to address this dire situation. Macquarie Harbour fish farm certifications should be immediately revoked, or they will be the first certification schemes in the world to certify an extinction of a species.” - **Alistair Allan, Bob Brown Foundation***

*“Shoppers should be outraged to know that not only are they being misled by these certification claims, but they are unknowingly contributing to the demise of a species as old as the dinosaurs,” - **Rebecca Howarth, Environment Tasmania***

*“The federal government is in Hobart again this week because the Tasmanian Government cannot be trusted to prevent the extinction of this species. Meanwhile, so-called ‘sustainability’ certification continues to greenwash the unsustainable practices of the salmon industry.” - **Eloise Carr, Tasmanian Director, the Australia Institute***

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Backgrounder:

[Letter to Best Aquaculture Practices](#)

Tassal (Cooke Aquaculture) and Petuna (Sealord) are BAP certified

[Letter to GlobalG.A.P.](#)

Huon Aquaculture (JBS) is GlobalG.A.P. certified

[IMAS Interim Report](#): Macquarie Harbour Maugean skate population status and monitoring

Visually impactful short-version open letter below ([or downloadable here](#))

Dear Best Aquaculture Practices and GlobalG.A.P.,

WE CALL ON YOU TO **IMMEDIATELY REVOKE** YOUR CERTIFICATIONS FROM FARMED SALMON AND OCEAN TROUT RAISED IN MACQUARIE HARBOUR, TASMANIA.

New scientific evidence identifies salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour as a key human activity significantly impacting the harbour's environmental health and contributing to the decline of the endangered Maugean skate – a relic from Gondwana that is considered possibly the rarest skate species in the world.

The endangered Maugean skate also shares its habitat with salmon and ocean trout farms certified by the BAP and GlobalG.A.P. schemes. According to an Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies report, the Maugean skate population has rapidly declined by nearly half (47%) from 2014 to 2021. The authors state any further reduction in numbers means "increasing their risk of extinction".

The report attributes the skate's decline to degraded environmental conditions in the harbour, particularly dissolved oxygen (DO) levels, caused by anthropogenic inputs, namely the expansion of the salmon aquaculture industry.

Macquarie Harbour fish farms are BAP and GlobalG.A.P. certified as being "environmentally responsible" and being sold to unsuspecting shoppers as 'sustainable'. **GREENWASHING THE EXTINCTION OF THE MAUGEAN SKATE IS NOT "ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE"**. We strongly urge BAP and GlobalG.A.P. to immediately revoke your certifications from all Macquarie Harbour fish farms. Sincerely,

