**Referee: 1**

This study conducts stakeholder interviews in Scotland to gather diverse perspectives on farmed salmon and examines its supply, composition, price, and nutrient content using secondary survey data. This topic is interesting, but I have several main concerns.

My main concern is that this study is based on stakeholder interviews, yet the results and discussion sections do not sufficiently reflect findings from these interviews. Instead, much of the description is derived from secondary data on the farmed salmon industry, including its supply, composition, price, and nutrient content (Figs. 1-4). Notably, the result section reads more like a background summary of the global and UK farmed salmon industry rather than an analysis of primary data. This section heavily relies on peer studies, which would be more appropriately placed in the introduction or discussion. To enhance clarity and alignment with the study’s objectives, I recommend restructuring this section to emphasize interview-based findings. The validated figures (Figs. 1-4) should serve as supplementary information rather than the focal point. Additionally, incorporating more quantitative analysis of the interview data and presenting the findings through visualized figures or tables would enhance readability and ensure that the primary data remains central to the discussion.

The methodology section needs to be restructured to improve its logical flow. The primary focus should be on the originality of the approach, emphasizing stakeholder interviews rather than validation through secondary data. To achieve this, I suggest reorganizing the methodology into two main subsections, first, stakeholder interviews - this subsection should outline more information about the interview process, including participant selection, data collection methods, and key themes identified. Second, validation approach - this subsection should describe how secondary data sources, such as UK farmed salmon production, UK aquatic food consumption, and market-making datasets, were used to support and contextualize the interview findings. A clearer logical progression could be the authors first conducted stakeholder interviews to identify key themes related to Scottish farmed salmon. Then, based on these identified topics, they validated the findings by identifying relevant data from sources such as FAO and survey datasets. This approach ensures that the interviews remain central to the study while using secondary data as a supplementary tool for validation.

Minor comments:

- The main findings in the abstract should focus more on insights from the interviews, rather than summarizing existing evidence from secondary data.

- The original data used in Fig. 1-4 are secondary data captured from international databases, surveys or reports. These visualizations summarize existing evidence, but no additional analysis has been conducted by the authors. Here, each figure should include citations to indicate their data sources.

- Line 101-103: Specify the number of interviewees from each category, i.e., aquaculture researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers, to provide clearer context on the composition of the stakeholder group.

- Line 166- 341: The results section should primarily focus on findings from the interviews and their validation using secondary data. Citations from peer studies should be relocated to the introduction or discussion or removed if not directly relevant to the findings.

- Line 167: The section titled Results: Scottish Salmon Context primarily presents secondary data, making it more suitable as background information. Consider restructuring this section to prioritize interview findings (e.g., under the topic Industry) and integrate relevant farmed salmon trends to provide context and support for these insights.

- Line 242: Table 1 is well-structured. The authors could consider reorganizing the results section using the topics Industry, Retailers, Diets, and Environment for better clarity and coherence. Additionally, it would be valuable to indicate the number of interviewees who highlighted each topic, providing a clearer sense of the key themes’ prevalence.

- The discussion is fine but could include study implications to highlight how the findings apply to the farmed salmon industry.

- Supplementary Table 1 presents the themes developed by the stakeholders and is well-documented. It would be helpful to summarize the main points and include more quantitative findings, such as the frequency of topics and linkages between them. These insights could be integrated into the main results section for better clarity.

**Referee: 2**

Thank you for the opportunity to read and review your manuscript. My expertise lies in fisheries management and aquaculture production. I have some experience in the marketing of products from these industries, but not enough to feel confident that I have completed an exhaustive review.

I have been involved in economic analyses of these industries and have had to make do with FAO and country databases in the past, which I have found to be unreliable for fine scale analysis. I think using multiple data sets and backing them up with industry stakeholder interviews goes some way to alleviate this concern, but this raises further concerns, too. If I understand correctly, a qualitative analysis of only eight industry members was undertaken, ranging across "activists, aquaculture researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers". It would have been interesting to know if the opinions of the respondents representing the above classes were different, or similar. Also, I found some of the comments reported in the supplementary material to be interesting and perhaps even significant but not mentioned in the analysis.

Without access to their background, I must assume that the authors are from the UK or are well versed in the UK/European market, where farmed salmon products are ubiquitous. It seems that their analysis misses one of the key market drivers; farmed salmon has intrinsic value as a very desirable food product. As an outsider looking in, farmed Norwegian salmon is a simply unaffordable premium product in my country, priced at least 3-4 times higher than other available fish species. Scottish salmon is probably worth more, if it were available here. It would be interesting to know if salmon has maintained its value as it has slowly replaced other aquatic products in the UK diet... in other words has the growth in production resulted from desirability or affordability?

All in all, a thought provoking, but somewhat frustrating article.

**Referee: 3**

I was asked to judge on how to proceed with this article as there are conflicting recommendations from two reviewers (accept vs. major revisions/resubmission).

Hence, I have read the paper and the review reports and provide some recommendation in the following, however not providing a full additional review report.

I agree with both reviewers that this is an interesting article that in principle deserves publication. I also agree with reviewer 1 that the methods section could be strengthened, i.e. the authors should take up the recommendations of the first reviewer made in the second larger paragraph of the report starting with “The methodology section needs to be restructured…”; also the smaller points raised should be addressed.

Regarding the first major point of reviewer 1, I see this less critical, as in the first part of the results, the interview results are rather prominent, while admittedly, later the secondary literature is in the focus. With the changes and additional information added to the methods section mentioned above, this point can well be addressed. Thereby, please consider the suggestions made by the reviewer to further strengthen the role of the interview results in the results presentation.

Finally, one minor point:

Page 11, line 337: “misleading consumers (Jacquet et al 2010).” – would be good to have a newer reference for this, as this can have changed much over the past 15 years….