*30th Jan 2025*

Dear *Environmental Research Letters* Editorial Board,

We wish to submit our manuscript “The hidden role of market-making in the rise of farmed salmon”to be considered for publication as a Letter. Aquaculture is often positioned as a key step in transitioning global food systems towards sustainable production of nutritious foods. Mariculture – farming in the sea – produces large quantities of Atlantic salmon through large-scale intensive systems, but supply is targeted at wealthy markets and has uncertain contributions to development goals. While production-side factors underlying the rise of farmed salmon are well understood, the role of markets in creating consumer demand has been overlooked.

To address this gap, **we investigated ‘market-making’ in farmed salmon in the UK**, combining stakeholder interviews with data on consumption, price, and nutrient profiles of aquatic food markets. Interview raised perspectives around the accessibility, popularity, health benefits, and sustainability of farmed salmon, which have been communicated through extensive labelling and accreditation schemes. Our analysis suggests that farmed salmon has become the most popular seafood in the UK, but **consumption remains lower than most other animal-source meats, and below recommended levels**, while environmental impacts of production have persisted. Farmed salmon was also the most expensive animal-source product, consumed primarily by affluent households, while consumption of other aquatic foods has decreased.

**We suggest that market-making for farmed salmon has squeezed more affordable, nutritious, and sustainable products from UK markets**. These insights could be used to raise consumption of less-popular foods, such as mussels, in line with UK health and sustainability targets. Our analysis spans multiple disciplines, including food security, nutrition and health research, aquaculture, and marketing. We believe that the findings are well-suited to *Environmental Research Letters’* focus on interdisciplinary research, particularly on sustainable food production systems, which we connect to societal impacts (economic, nutrition, environmental) and policy implications.

Our manuscript main text is 3,988 (excluding captions, tables, titles, abstract, references), with one table and four figures, and is not under consideration elsewhere. We recommend three experts in marketing, UK seafood systems, and aquaculture as reviewers:

* Dr Christian Fuentes ([christian.fuentes@ses.lu.se](mailto:christian.fuentes@ses.lu.se), Marketing at Lund University)
* Dr Ruth Thurstan ([R.Thurstan@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:R.Thurstan@exeter.ac.uk), UK seafood, University of Essex)
* Dr Richard Cottrell ([r.cottrell@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.cottrell@uq.edu.au), aquaculture at University of Queensland)

Yours sincerely,

**Dr James PW Robinson**

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