

When farmed fish first enter wild systems, there can be several identifying features. However, once farmed fish have been in the wild for a while it can be harder to distinguish from wild fish (see below). Often a ragged or wavy dorsal fin is the most noticeable feature of a farmed fish but the images below show a range of identifying features.



'Wavy' dorsal fin.
Credit: Ness DSFB



'Ragged' dorsal fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides
Fisheries Trust



Damaged pectoral fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides
Fisheries Trust



Farmed fish pectoral fin showing that damage may be minimal.
Credit: Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust



Farmed fish tail fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust



Shortened gill covers. Credit: Ness DSFB

Less obvious indicators include more spots than a wild fish (especially below the lateral line). Once these fish have been in the wild for a while, the distinction of these features may diminish, and it could become harder to identify conclusively. Escapees at sea for some time will re-grow their fins perfectly but by running your finger along the leading edge of a farmed salmon's pectoral fin it will feel bumpy in comparison to a wild's smooth one. Anglers should remain vigilant with their catches and seek second opinions where doubt occurs.



Fisheries Management Scotland are collecting information related to catches of farmed fish and details can be found on our Website (www.fms.scot) or scan the QR code for direct form access.

