



Humane Slaughter Association

## Media Release

24 July 2020

### **The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) announces the award of £166,000 to explore the possibility of improving the welfare of wild-caught fish at slaughter**

As part of its ongoing support to encourage the development and adoption of humane slaughter methods for fish, the HSA has just announced further grant funding of £166,000 to investigate the potential for improving the welfare at slaughter of fish caught in the wild.

The award has been made to Dr Nicola Randall, Director of the Centre for Evidence-Based Agriculture at Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire, to carry out a global systematic review into humane capture and slaughter of fish caught on a commercial scale in the wild for food. Dr Randall and her team will collate and analyse existing information and data across a broad spectrum: from methods of capture and killing to location and number of fish caught. The results, together with expert evaluation, will be used to inform a feasibility analysis of which fishing system, species of fish, geographical fishing area, etc is most likely to be suitable to the adoption of commercially viable stunning of wild-caught fish. The research will also consider the sustainability of such methods (economic, environmental, ethical and social considerations including practicality).

Dr Randall is a specialist in the use of scientific evidence to support and underpin policy and decision making at the highest level. She said: *“We will use a systematic mapping technique to provide an overview of available evidence, and to identify gaps in knowledge. This ‘systematic mapping’ technique follows structured predefined methods to reduce bias, and increase the transparency of our work. It enables us to sift through, summarise and evaluate multiple pieces of, sometimes conflicting, evidence to build a holistic picture. The findings are then presented in a way that is designed to enable the HSA and other users to easily use the research to inform their decision making, and prioritise areas for future research.”*

The HSA is committed to encouraging the development and adoption of humane slaughter methods for fish caught in the wild and this project is a key step in the process. Billions of fish are caught for food every year, the vast majority of these fish are not stunned before slaughter and there is good evidence that

many wild-caught fish may experience significant suffering between the time they are captured and their death.

Dr Huw Golledge, the HSA's CEO and Scientific Director said: *"This research forms a crucial part of our plan to explore the possibility that wild-caught fish might be humanely stunned in a similar, commercially-viable way to many farmed fish. The sheer scale of the wild-capture fishing industry, combined with an almost complete absence of humane stunning, makes this one of the major animal welfare issues globally. The study we are supporting will rigorously and systematically examine the current evidence base, so that we can decide what future work is needed to move towards routine stunning of wild-caught fish."*

The funding for this research has been made possible due to a generous donation. The project will start in late July 2020 and is expected to take two years to complete.

-ENDS-

#### **Note to Editors:**

**Background:** In November last year, the HSA offered up to £200,000 to support a systematic study into humane capture and slaughter of fish caught on a commercial scale in the wild for food. The aim of this research is to investigate the feasibility of the development and use of methods of humane stunning or stun/killing for wild-caught fish in order to minimise pain or distress in wild-capture commercial fisheries. This is part of a programme of research and development to improve the welfare of fish, crustaceans and cephalopods at slaughter. This work has been made possible due to an extremely generous donation.

Further information on humane slaughter of fish, and consumer choices, can be found in the HSA finfish consumer video at [www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk) which is available in various languages.

**The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA)** is an independent charity recognised internationally for promoting scientific, technical and educational advances towards improving the welfare of food animals worldwide at slaughter, killing, marketing and transport.

Its work includes researching, refining and demonstrating humane slaughter methods, publishing material such as guidelines, best practice, books and videos, funding research projects and the development of equipment. Specialist technical staff provide expert and practical advice on all welfare issues relating to food animals.

The HSA is funded by voluntary donations, subscriptions and legacies.

For more information about the HSA's work call 01582 831919, email [info@hsa.org.uk](mailto:info@hsa.org.uk) or visit [www.hsa.org.uk](http://www.hsa.org.uk)

