

# Salmon spill sullies push for new farm

By Phong Le  
Associated Press

**SEATTLE** >> A net pen holding 305,000 farmed Atlantic salmon collapsed recently, releasing thousands of fish into Puget Sound and renewing concerns that a new proposed salmon farm could harm wild salmon stock and cause other environmental damage.

The release at Cooke Aquaculture's facility comes as the company is proposing a new expanded commercial facility in the Strait of Juan de Fuca in Washington state.

Canadian-based Cooke, which operates five salmon farms in Washington that it acquired last year, would build 14 floating circular net pens about 1.5 miles offshore. It would move current operations from Port Angeles Harbor and increase production by 20 percent. The project is in the permitting phase.

Critics say the recent fish escape highlights potential risks of open-sea fish farming. They worry about water



SEATTLE TIMES

**Allen Cooke, left, and Nathan Cuite emerged from the hold of the Marathon after separating out the 16 farm-raised Atlantic salmon they caught fishing off Point Williams, Wash., on Tuesday — some of the thousands of Atlantic salmon that escaped from a Puget Sound pen over the weekend.**

pollution from fish feed and the potential for farmed fish to spread diseases and parasites to wild fish.

"These are open net pens. They're not isolated from surrounding environment," said Chris Wilke, executive director of the Puget Sound Soundkeeper Alliance, which opposes the project.

Ron Warren, who heads

escaped salmon, some up to 10 pounds, as possible.

Washington has the largest marine finfish aquaculture industry in the U.S. with farms producing about 17 million pounds of Atlantic salmon each year, according to the state.

While salmon farms have operated for more than 30 years in Washington, they still remain controversial in the Pacific Northwest, where wild salmon reigns supreme.

Alaska has banned commercial finfish aquaculture. Several counties in the state, such as Whatcom County have moved to limit commercial finfish aquaculture.

Cooke blamed high tides and currents coinciding with Monday's solar eclipse for the failure over the weekend at its farm off Cypress Island in Skagit County.

"The ongoing tides were a huge challenge," said Neil Halse, a Cooke spokeswoman. She said the company called in experts last month to stabilize the salmon farm during high tides, though no fish escaped then.

"We put our best expertise to stabilizing this farm, and we had no reason to believe that it would have collapsed on Sunday."

Critics weren't buying that reasoning, noting that tides weren't higher than usual over the weekend.

"They're trying to imply that this was some unnatural natural event. This was absolute negligence on their part," said Kurt Beardslee, executive director of the Wild Conservancy. Fish farms "are polluting every single day a massive amount of phosphorus and nitrogen into the waters that we're trying to clean up."

Halse said Cooke had applied for permits to upgrade the net pens at Cypress Island to its level of standards. It also plans to make investments in operations across the state.

The Lummi Nation has been so concerned about the fish escapes that tribal anglers have been trying to catch the Atlantic salmon before they enter local rivers. The tribe declared a state of emergency Thurs-

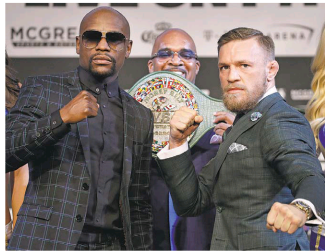
day, saying the fish spill needs to be addressed immediately. Tribal officials are worried that farmed salmon will eat native fish or disturb spawning grounds.

Michael Rust, science adviser with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's aquaculture office, said farmed salmon tend to be domesticated, raised on feed and not used to catching fish or escaping predators. Farmed salmon are more likely to be prey than predator, he said.

He and others say science and technology advances have improved fish farming practices in the U.S. over the decades and that aquaculture operations must meet strict regulations.

Bill Rolland, who directs the U.S. Geological Survey's Western Fisheries Research Center in Seattle, said she's not concerned that the escaped fish have any pathogens that will spread to wild fish. "We have a very strong regulatory environment to ensure that these fish are under veterinary care," she said.

**Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, and Conor McGregor are scheduled to fight Saturday in Las Vegas. They posed for photographers Wednesday during a news conference in Las Vegas.**



ASSOCIATED PRESS

## McGregor win would box the ears of Vegas bookies

By Tim Dahlberg  
Associated Press

**LAS VEGAS** >> Conor McGregor is making a lot of wise guys nervous in this gambling city.

Should he somehow manage to knock out Floyd Mayweather Jr. in the early rounds Saturday night, the city's bookmakers would lose millions of dollars in the biggest single-event loss in the history of sports betting.

McGregor fans have flooded sports books with \$100 bills backing the mixed martial arts fighter, and even a late surge of money on Mayweather might not be enough to balance the books.

"I'm OK now," said William Hill oddsmaker Nick Bogdanovich. "But you might want to have a heart monitor on me when the bell rings and Conor starts throwing wild lefts."

Bogdanovich said his chain of sports books will suffer multimillion-dollar losses — their worst ever — should McGregor win the fight in any fashion. If he wins early as he has promised, the losses would be even worse.

The big bettors are putting their money on Mayweather, who is 490 as a pro. But so many McGregor fans are betting small amounts that the betting slips at William Hill were 15:1 in the Irish fighter's favor.

"This isn't professional money, just the regular Joe," Bogdanovich said. "The butcher and the barber are putting their \$100 on McGregor, and it's added up."

The action is reflected in the odds, which bookmakers adjust either way as

money comes in on the two fighters. Bookmakers have been lowering the odds steadily since the fight was announced, but even that hasn't stopped the deluge of McGregor bets.

A fight that began with Mayweather an 11-1 favorite is now 5-1 or even less in some sports books. Even that hasn't stopped McGregor supporters from lining up at the betting windows to hand over even more cash.

"They're backing a long shot, hoping that the payout will be huge."

"There's plenty of money on a guy who has never been in a boxing ring," said Jimmy Vaccaro, oddsmaker at the South Point resort.

"It's uncharted waters, and that's what makes it so interesting."

Vaccaro said his sports book stood to lose about \$400,000 on a McGregor win, but that was balanced a bit by a bettor who put \$100,000 Wednesday night on Mayweather. His book also took an \$880,000 bet on Mayweather earlier that would pay off just \$160,000 if he wins.

There have also been big Mayweather bets at the MGM Grand, including a \$500,000 wager Wednesday. MGM Resorts oddsmaker Jay Rood, though, said the sheer volume of McGregor bets is overwhelming the big Mayweather bet.

Rood said his books have taken 6,700 bets on McGregor and only 300 on Mayweather. The average bet on McGregor is \$125, while the average for Mayweather is \$4,000.

If McGregor wins, Rood said MGM will be a big loser, and the state will suffer its biggest single-event loss ever.

"We're all in the same boat," Rood said. "Anything McGregor one to four rounds is pretty bad. Any McGregor knockout is not going to be good."

So far, the betting has been unusually active around town, bringing predictions that the volume could set records. Bookmakers say as the fight draws closer the heaviest influx of money will come, especially on Saturday.

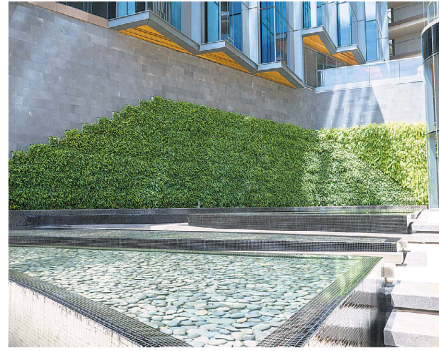
The news is not all bad for oddsmakers, who have struggled to no longer lines for a fight that has no precedent. Most believe Mayweather is an easy winner and should be favored by a much bigger margin, but have had to cut odds to try and balance their books.

Though an overwhelming majority of the tickets are on McGregor, a lot of books have more money wagered on Mayweather. Since bookmakers will have to pay out a lot less to those betting Mayweather, they will likely score big if Mayweather wins as expected.

"We're just kind of going along balancing and are in great shape win on both sides, no matter who wins," said Johnny Avolio, oddsmaker at the Wynn resort. "A lot of guys are putting down \$125,000 or so to win whatever on Mayweather, so we're high on him now."

Even if McGregor wins and the sports books lose big, all is not lost. Bettors like to be reminded they can win, and the extra betting on football generated by McGregor bettors at the books will help ease some of the pain.

"We don't mind a large decision on a big spectacle like this," Bogdanovich said. "It gets people in our books."



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## Living large

The largest "living" wall in Hawaii was completed at Ward Village this week at the new Anaha tower, which opens to residents this fall. The wall is composed of more than 8,000 tropical plants — including ferns, bromeliads and syngonium — and is 113 feet wide and 15 feet high. The living artwork was locally designed by Greg and Terri Lee of 1st Look Exteriors. It took nearly a year to create and runs through both the exterior and interior grand entrance of the building.

## Hawaii tops energy survey

By Nina Wu  
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Hawaii again ranked No. 1 in a national nonprofit's survey of state investments in energy efficiency projects.

The Energy Services Coalition recognized Hawaii as the nation's per capita leader in energy performance contracting in its annual "Race to the Top" award for the sixth consecutive year, according to the Hawaii State Energy Office.

Through energy performance contracting, government agencies can pay for capital improvements such as more efficient lighting and air conditioning that re-

sult in better energy efficiency through savings on their utility bills. Since 1996, state and local government agencies have signed performance contracts for 295 buildings and facilities in Hawaii, according to the office.

"The growth of energy performance contracting is making a significant impact on Hawaii's use of imported fossil fuels while helping diversify our economy by sustaining and creating jobs in the clean tech sector," said Luis Salaveria, director of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, in a news release. "I commend

the state and county agencies that are executing energy performance contracts, and for playing a leadership role in Hawaii's clean energy transformation."

In its annual "Race to the Top" survey, all 50 states are ranked based on the per capita amount invested in performance contracts for government buildings. Hawaii invested \$372.81 per capita compared with the national average of \$62.72 per capita, creating more than 5,400 jobs in 2017. Hawaii was also named an "Energy Stewardship Champion."

To see the report, go to [energy-servicescoalition.org](http://energy-servicescoalition.org).