

BEAULY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD

SALMON & SEA TROUT CONSERVATION POLICY

2018

The Beauly District Fishery Board has a statutory duty to act for the protection and improvement of the fisheries and for the increase of salmon and sea trout within its District. With declining rates of marine survival, the conservation of stocks should be of prime importance to all anglers. This Conservation Policy represents a minimum requirement all anglers should adhere to.

SALMON

11TH FEBRUARY TO 31ST MARCH - STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

Under **The Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Time and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2014**, it is an offence to retain any salmon caught before 1 April. By law, all fish must be released. Every effort should be made to ensure no harm is caused to fish prior to release.

1ST APRIL – TO CLOSE OF SEASON

The Scottish Government has announced conservation regulations meaning that mandatory catch and release of salmon (all methods) will be in force across the Beauly District throughout the 2018 salmon fishing season. Any salmon caught, including any dead or bleeding fish, must be returned to the water with the least possible harm.

SEA TROUT

- Release all finnock of $\frac{3}{4}$ lb (32cm/12½ inches) or less
- Release all sea trout of 3 lbs (50cm/20 inches) or above
- Retain only two fish per angler per week with a maximum of six per season
- All coloured and unseasonable fish should be released (smolts, kelts, over-wintered finnock)

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- Fishing should be by Fly only.
- To facilitate the release of fish barbless or crimped hooks should be used. Treble hooks should not be used.
- Under the provisions of The Conservation of Salmon (Prohibition of Sale) (Scotland) Regulations 2002 the sale of rod caught salmon or sea trout is illegal.
- When releasing fish, try to keep them in water at all times and under no circumstances should fish be lifted clear of the water by their tails.
- Guidance on catch & release best practice can be found on the Board's website <http://beauly.dsfb.org.uk/>
- The use of 'knotless' mesh landing nets is a legal requirement and will help prevent the fish from being damaged.

How can salmon be recognised at the different stages of their life?

Fresh-Run Salmon

Recognised by the pristine condition and bright silver flanks. Fish straight from salt water have loose, easily detached scales and many carry sea lice which drop off within a few days. Hen salmon (illustrated) have a tiny kype on the lower jaw, but unlike cocks they retain normal head proportions while in the river.



Maturing 'coloured' Cock & Hen

Cock: The combination of "tartan" colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals, and the enlarged adipose fin, are the most consistent indicators of maturity.



Hen: These are usually less coloured than cocks of similar age and they never have enlarged jaws. This one will have spent a few weeks in river or estuary - note the coloured head and lack of true silver flanks.



'Unseasonal' Cock & Hen in Breeding Dress

Cock: The combination of 'tartan' colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals is the most consistent indicator of maturity.



Hen: This is a summer fish – 'springers' are often darker by spawning time while late entrants may still be silver flanked. Fully mature hens have soft, swollen bellies and spawning is imminent if they also have protruding vents.



'Unclean' Kelt

Kelts are salmon which have spawned. Usually identified by the thin shape, distended vent and presence of "gill maggots" on the red gill filaments, they are often encountered by anglers in spring when they regain a silvery appearance and can be mistaken for fresh run 'springers'. Kelts must be returned unharmed.



(Illustrations used with permission from the Atlantic Salmon Trust www.atlanticsalmontrust.org)