



River Tweed Commission

TWEED ANGLING CODE FOR SALMON & SEA-TROUT

A guide to the law, the rules and good practice
For anglers on Tweed and its tributaries
[REVISED 2021]

The aim of this code is to protect wild fish stocks, the environment and other wildlife, and to ensure an excellent experience for anglers and other river users

It is in two sections:

The Law
The Rules

Owners, managers, associations and clubs should ensure that the principles of this code are applied on their beats and should withdraw permission to fish from anyone who breaks either the law or the rules

THE LAW

Legal regulations contained in statute, a breach of which could lead to criminal proceedings.

- The season is from 1 February to 30 November
- No salmon or Sea-trout fishing on Sundays
- Before 15 February and after 14 September – artificial fly only
- All caught Salmon & Sea-trout (whether killed or released), excluding kelts (fish already spawned), baggots and kippers (fish from the previous year that haven't yet spawned) must be recorded in the beat's record book, which must be kept for at least 5 years

It is illegal to

- 1 February – 31 March Take Salmon or Sea-trout – dead or alive
- Sell rod-caught fish**
- Fish without legal right or written permission from the beat's owner or his/her representative
- Use prawns or shrimps as bait throughout the catchment
- Use worms, or lures with multiple hooks (other than a single, double or treble hook)*
- Deliberately attempt to foul-hook fish, or to kill fish caught this way
- Use any implement other than a net to land fish
- Kill kelts, smolts or parr
- Kill unclean or unseasonal fish (including baggots, kippers, fish about to spawn or already spawning)

* At any time of the year on Ettrick & Yarrow and their tributaries: River Tweed between the old road bridge crossing above the River Ettrick to the coastal limits of the district: Gala Water downstream from the Boleside road bridge: the Leader Water downstream from the Leaderfoot bridge: River Teviot downstream from the Kelso to St Boswells road bridge: River Till downstream from the Twizel Cauld: River Whiteadder downstream from the Newmills Cauld

** Fish refers to Salmon & Sea-trout throughout

The responsibility for enforcement of Tweed law is vested in the RTC by the Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006, and is implemented by our Fishery Officers who have powers to prosecute offenders. Breaking the law could lead to criminal proceedings.

THE RULES

These rules have been agreed in consultation throughout the river, and carefully drafted to achieve our conservation aims and minimise any disruption to anglers. We trust you support us in ensuring the whole river is responsibly fished. The Tweed has a world-class reputation to uphold.

- 1 February – 30 June Total catch-and-release throughout the catchment, to protect fragile spring stocks. See <https://www.rivertweed.org.uk/anglingcodes/> or RTC Angling Code for Spring Salmon for more information
- You should return any spring Salmon, caught by any method after 30 June – they will be coloured and increasingly mature
- 1 February – 30 June Only Salmon that have actually died during resuscitation can be removed from the water. No-one may kill a Salmon (eg with a priest). ON NO ACCOUNT MAY YOU KILL A SALMON ON PURPOSE BEFORE 1 JULY
- Other than in the spring (1 February to 30 June) there are no catch limits, but we urge you to adopt catch-and-release across the season, and to keep only fish you can sensibly make use of
- Remember all hen fish caught after 14 September should be returned – they are unfit for anything other than spawning
- Coloured/ripe fish do not eat or smoke well. Return them
- It is difficult to be exact about what is a keepable fish. Your first fish ever, or your only fish for the week might be keepable, but the same fish should be returned if there are plenty other more beautiful ones out there. IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE PUT IT BACK!

Also

- No artificial prawns or shrimps to be used
- Maximum treble size – No. 6
- Return all foul-hooked fish (fish not hooked in or around the mouth)
- Move steadily through the pool, normally at a rate of 1 metre between casts
- Be considerate to other anglers, and remain at least 20 metres apart when fishing

To avoid foul-hooking

- Maximum cast/leader breaking strain – 25 lbs
- Hooks or tubes should be properly dressed, ie with coloured body and a reasonable quantity of hair /fur/feather/etc in proportion to the hook size – not a bare treble with a few feathers tied on
- No weights or swivel devices that are not part of the body of the fly are allowed
- Unless fishing with a floating line, cast downstream of square with only a slow retrieve until the cast has been fished out
- Unless fishing with a floating line, make no retrieve, other than slow hand lining or reeling in, until the cast has been fished out

SPINNING

There's a view that old Springers are more likely to be caught in low water after 1 July (when the Spring Conservation period ends) by spinning. Please choose your methods accordingly, bearing in mind that spring stocks are fragile.

- Spinning should not be the method of first choice in low and clear water conditions
- Spinning rules are down to individual beats. Please take particular care where a beat has different owners on opposite banks. In such cases accepted etiquette gives fly-fishers the chance to fish the water first, spinning only when this opportunity has passed
- Proprietors can choose to restrict spinning on their beats to comparatively high and coloured water conditions, especially from 1 July to 14 September (after which spinning is illegal) when Spring conservation rules are not in force

GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS

In order to minimise the risk of spreading Gyrodactylus salaris to Scotland, all anglers' equipment which has been used outside Britain and Ireland within the preceding seven days must be cleaned either by:

- a) Drying at a minimum temperature of 20°C for at least 2 days,
OR
- b) Heating for at least one hour at a temperature above 60°C.,
OR
- c) Immersing in a suitable solution. Virkon (at 1% solution); Wescodyne (at 1%); a 3% solution of common salt (Sodium Chloride), or a 0.2% solution of Sodium Hydroxide,
OR
- d) Deep freezing for at least 1 day.

Anglers will be required to sign a Declaration to this effect and the Gyrodactylus Declaration form can be downloaded from the RTC's website: www.rtc.org.uk/declaration.pdf

Fishing huts on the river should also have a Gs Record Book for visiting anglers to sign.

HANDLING FISH

Fish should be handled with extreme care, especially those that have been injured, or become exhausted whilst being played

- Kill any fish you are keeping quickly and efficiently with an appropriate priest
- Use a knotless net
- Don't take the fish out of the water if at all possible. If you want a photograph, kneel with the fish in the water, holding it by its tail or the tail and under the chin
- Don't hold a fish up by its gills or hold it close to your body under any circumstances
- Handle the fish as little and gently as possible – but remember even though scales are very loose on fresh spring Salmon, they sit in shallow pockets within the skin and losing them does not break the skin or cause any problems
- Fish should be supported gently and upright in the water until they swim away on their own
- You must allow the fish time to recover before letting it loose in the river. This may take a long time (up to 30 minutes)

SHARE & PROTECT

Water space is in high demand. We have to share its enjoyment and protect it in every way we can.

- If your equipment has been used outside the British Isles – you must treat it in order to protect Tweed from Gyrodactylus salaris (see box above)
- Observe the boundaries of your beat
- Consider anglers on the opposite bank
- If you are spinning, give precedence to fly fishers
- Make sure you can recognize kelts, baggots & kippers – it is the law to return them
- Be nice to other water users – especially if they are nice to you
- Stick to the Country Code – especially dogs, fires and gates
- Park vehicles safely – no obstructed gateways or road hazards
- Don't damage river banks or disturb wildlife. Don't leave litter or tackle – nylon especially is lethal
- Think safety. Wear a life jacket or equivalent, and protect your eyes. Watch for overhead electric lines. Stop fishing in an electric storm. Wade with care

Enjoy your fishing and support the tweed foundation!

**ILLEGAL ACTIVITY SHOULD BE REPORTED
TO THE TWEED FISHERIES OFFICERS:**

01896 848294 / 07884 230045



RIVER TWEED COMMISSION

Established by order under The Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006

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