

TWEED ANGLING CODE FOR SALMON & SEA-TROUT

A guide to legal restrictions and good practice when fishing on Tweed and its tributaries

[REVISED 2021]

With more people fishing for Salmon, and the many environmental pressures on Salmon increasing, as well as exploitation continuing to make high demands on wild stocks, it becomes ever more important for the Salmon angler to set a good example in standards of sportsmanship and in care for wild stocks, the environment, wildlife and fellow anglers.

The purpose of this code is to encourage such standards and to avoid behaviour which may bring the sport into disrepute.

This Code consists of two sections:

Section A Statutory regulations.

Section B Regulations to be imposed by beat owners including the Spring Salmon Conservation measures.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

Owners, managers, associations and clubs should ensure that the principles of this code are applied to their beats and are expected to withdraw permission to fish from those who contravene Sections A and B.

SECTION A: THE LAW

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

- The season starts on 1st February and ends on 30th November.
- Salmon and Sea-trout fishing is prohibited on Sundays.
- It is illegal to take any Salmon or Sea-trout – dead or alive – from 1st February to 31st March each year.
- Salmon & Sea-trout fishing is with artificial fly only before February 15th and after September 14th.
- It is illegal to sell rod-caught fish.
- It is illegal to fish without legal right or written permission from the beat's owner or their representative.
- It is illegal to use prawns or shrimps as bait throughout the catchment and throughout the year.
- It is illegal to use either worms (by any method) or lures with multiple hooks (other than a single double or treble, hook) at any time of year on: Ettrick and Yarrow and their tributaries; River Tweed between the old road bridge crossing above the confluence with the River Ettrick to the coastal limits of the District; Gala Water downstream from the Boleside road bridge; 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.
- It is illegal to attempt deliberately to foul-hook fish.
- It is illegal to use any implement other than a net to land a fish.
- It is illegal to kill kelts, smolts and parr.
- It is illegal to kill unclean or unseasonable fish (which include baggots, kippers, fish about to spawn or in the process of spawning) and deliberately foul-hooked fish.
- All caught fish (whether or not they are actually killed), **must** be recorded in the beat's record book and the records retained for a minimum of **five years**.

Excluding:

- kelts (any Salmon that have already spawned);
- in the Spring only, baggots and kippers (sexually mature Salmon from the previous year that have not yet spawned, ie. which are full of spawn or milt)

[Salmon in this context means Salmon or Sea-trout]

SECTION B: TWEED RULES

Regulations which the Commission expects beat owners to impose.

All methods of fishing:

- Artificial prawns or shrimps should not be used.
- Maximum treble size – No.6.
- All hen fish caught after the 14th September should be returned as being unfit for any purpose other than spawning.
- All foul-hooked fish (fish not hooked in or around the mouth) should be returned.
- Continue to move steadily through the pool, normally at a rate of 1 metre between casts.

Fly fishing and in order to avoid foul-hooking, the following rules have been agreed:

- Maximum cast/leader breaking strain - 25lbs.
- Hooks or tubes should be **properly dressed**, i.e. with coloured body and a reasonable quantity of hair/fur/feather 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 permitted.
- Unless fishing with a floating line, casts should be made **downstream of square** with only **a slow retrieve** until the cast has been fished out.
- Unless fishing with a floating line, no retrieve, other than slow hand lining or reeling in to be made until the cast has been fished out.
- Anglers should be considerate to each other and remain at least 20 metres apart when fishing.

THE NEED FOR RULES

The rules have been carefully drafted to ensure their effectiveness whilst minimising any disruption to the legitimate fisherman. We hope that the latter will understand the need for action and accept any inconvenience to them as their part in ensuring that the Tweed as a whole is responsibly fished.

The statutory responsibility for enforcement of Tweed law, as set out in Section A, has been vested in the River Tweed Commission by Parliament and is implemented by their bailiffs who have powers to prosecute offenders.

SPINNING

There is a view that old Springers are more likely to be caught in low water after 1st July (when the Spring Conservation Measures end) by spinning.

- Spinning should NOT be the method of first choice in low and clear water conditions.**
- Rules for spinning are determined by individual beats. However particular care should be taken where a beat has different owners on opposite banks. In such cases, good etiquette is that fly fishers should have the opportunity to fish the water first and only when this opportunity has passed should spinning be used.
- Where proprietors wish to do so, they can restrict spinning on their beats to comparatively high and coloured water conditions, and perhaps especially in the period 1st July to 14th September (after which spinning is illegal) and when the Spring Conservation Measures are not applicable.
- Old Spring fish, **caught by any fishing method after 30th June**, should be returned as they will have become coloured and increasingly mature.

THE TWEED SPRING SALMON CONSERVATION MEASURES

The Spring season is defined as 1st February to 30th June inclusive. **Total Catch-and-Release applies to the whole of the Tweed River system during this time.** Before you start fishing you should familiarise yourself, with these rules, which are laid out in a separate leaflet and at <https://www.rivertweed.org.uk/fishing/tweed-angling-codes/>

HANDLING FISH

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

- Mortality during the Spring season.** Only those Salmon and Grilse that have actually died in the course of resuscitation, after 31st March, may be removed from the water. No one is allowed to dispatch a Salmon or Grilse, e.g. by use of a priest. Anglers are urged to adopt a catch-and-release culture across the season and never to kill any fish which they do not require.

ON NO ACCOUNT MAY ANY SALMON OR GRILSE BE KILLED ON PURPOSE BEFORE 1ST JULY.

- Outside the period of the Spring Salmon Conservation Measures** there are no catch limits, but anglers are expected to keep only fish which they make use of.
- Fish to be retained** should be promptly and efficiently dispatched with an appropriate priest.
- Fish Handling.** Fish should be handled with extreme care, especially those that have been injured or become exhausted whilst being played.

- Use a knotless net.
- Do not take the fish out of the water if at all possible; if photographing a fish, anglers should kneel with the fish also still in the water, held gently by the tail and under the chin.
- Do not hold a fish up by its tail or hold close to your body **under any circumstances**.
- Handle the fish as little as possible and **as gently as possible**: scales are very loose on fresh Spring Salmon but as they sit in shallow pockets within the skin, losing them does not break it or cause any problem.
- Fish should be supported gently and upright in the water until such time as they swim away on their own
- Anglers **must** allow the fish time to recover before letting it loose in the River; this may take a long time (up to 30 minutes).

- Ripe/darkly coloured fish**
All hen fish caught after the 14th September should be returned as being unfit for any purpose other than spawning.

Coloured/ripe fish are not suitable for eating fresh or for smoking and should be returned. It is not possible to lay down precise criteria for determining what is a keepable fish. Common sense and discretion should be used, taking into account all the circumstances; for example, a fish that was the angler's first fish or his only fish for the week might be considered keepable whereas a fish in the same condition should be returned when fresh fish are plentiful. IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE PUT IT BACK!

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:

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

GENERAL CONDUCT

Angling as a sport and recreation can easily be disrupted by external interference. Water space is in great demand, both from anglers and other activities, and therefore its enjoyment has to be shared. The following points should be observed by every angler.

- If your fishing equipment has been used outside Britain and Ireland, **it is vital** that you clean and treat it in one of the approved ways described in Section B in order to prevent any risk of spreading Gyrodactylus salaris to Tweed.
- Observe the bounds of any beat to which you have been assigned.
- Give consideration to anglers on the opposite bank.
- Anglers fishing with spinners should give precedence to fly fishers.
- Make sure you can recognise kelts, baggots and kippers so that you can comply with the legal requirement to return them to the water.
- Acknowledge considerate behaviour by other legitimate water users.
- Follow the Country Code, particularly in relation to control of dogs, the risk of fires and fastening gates.
- Do not park vehicles so that they obstruct gateways or cause a hazard on the road.
- Avoid damage to the waterside or disturbance to wildlife; no tackle or litter should be discarded, particularly nylon which is a hazard to wildlife.
- Be safety conscious, wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid and eye protection, be aware of overhead electric lines, stop fishing in electric storms and wade cautiously.
- Support the Tweed Foundation and other organisations that safeguard your sport.

ILLEGAL ACTIVITY SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE TWEED FISHERIES OFFICERS:

01896 848294 / 07884 230045