

Category 3 Conservation Policy 2024

Atlantic Salmon are classified as an endangered species - if they were mammals or birds they would be protected, and fishing would be banned.

The Scottish Government review of the conservation status for the 2023 season has proposed retaining the category 3 status for the Allt Graad (Glass) and Balnagowan rivers, which means full catch and release. This categorisation also extends to the estuary waters and to the unclassified River Skiach (Sgitheach)

ENFORCEMENT

- Proprietors and clubs are urged to make compliance with this policy a condition of their leases and permits.

SALMON

- Due to the Scottish Government's categorisation, 100% catch and release must be adhered to.

SEA TROUT

- Sea Trout over 1½lbs are particularly valuable and should be released. A maximum of one sea trout over 1½lbs per angler per week may be killed but it would be preferable to kill only smaller fish, preferably Finnock under 1lb.

GENERAL

- Treble hooks are not to be used under any circumstances.
- Barbless hooks are considered best practice.
- All coloured fish must be released.
- The Board is concerned that fish caught by worming may be difficult to release unharmed. Where worming is permitted only circle hooks to be used.
- When releasing fish, landing nets (knotless) should be used to minimise fish handling and stress. Under no circumstances should fish be beached or taken out of the water for any period of time - the priority is to minimize fish handling and stress. Forceps should be carried by all anglers.
- It is recommended that fishing be suspended when water temperatures exceed 18°C (64°F). During exceptionally high temperatures fishing should be restricted to the early hours of morning. Lower oxygen content in warm water significantly reduces the recovery and therefore survival of salmon and should be considered when fishing.

PINK SALMON

Subject to any further Government advice any pink salmon caught should be killed and passed to a member of the Board staff for analysis. However, it is very important to identify that any fish are genuinely pink salmon, as killing an Atlantic salmon would be illegal.

RED SKIN DISEASE

Fish caught displaying signs of red 'rash', bleeding and/or ulceration should be photographed and reported to Board staff, again killing a diseased Atlantic salmon would be illegal under category 3 rivers.

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