

General salmon (including sea trout) fishing legislation

It is illegal to:

fish without legal right or written permission from the beat owner or representative	fish with prawns, shrimps or salmon roe throughout the catchment
kill unclean or unseasonable fish (bagbots, gravid fish, kelts)	use gaffs or tailers
sell or buy wild salmon roe	fish on a Sunday
attempt to deliberately foul-hook fish	sell rod caught salmon or sea trout

Recommendations to ensure best possible fish welfare:

- Further advice is available on the Forth DSFB website - <http://forthdsfb.org/protecting-the-fish/catch-release/>
- Please use a knotless landing net to ensure best possible fish handling – [link to video](#) – and ‘keep ‘em wet.’
- In times of dry weather, low water and rising river temperatures salmon and trout are under increasing stress. The ForthDSFB recommends that fishing ceases when river water temperatures exceeds 18°C and anglers should consider lighter tackle and ceasing spinning when the river is in the low category on any SEPA gauge within the Forth.
<https://www.fishforth.org/fishing-during-hot-weather/>
- The Board recommends any lure with a multi hook lure set up be taken down to single hook set up. i.e single, double or treble. The Board recommends anglers de-barb all hooks.

Restrictions on fishing:

Fishing above and below manmade structures can cause additional pressure on fish which are held up waiting to move upstream. The Forth DSFB requires that an adequate exclusion zone is agreed with the DSFB at ALL manmade barriers whether they have a fish pass or not to prevent pressure on migrating fish. Our recommendation is that this is 50 metres above and below the structure. In agreement with local owners/managers some areas are placed into conservation and fishing for migratory species is prohibited. Fishing within these areas is without permission and therefore considered an offence under section 6 of the Salmon Act 2003.

All farmed salmon and pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorboscha*) must be retained and notified to the ForthDSFB.

Scottish Government guidance for categories:

Category	Advice
Good conservation status (1)	At least 80% probability of meeting the conservation limit. Exploitation is sustainable therefore no additional management action is currently required. This recognises the effectiveness of existing non-statutory local management interventions.
Moderate conservation status (2)	Between 60-80% probability of meeting the conservation limit. Management action is necessary to reduce exploitation. Catch and release should be promoted strongly in the first instance. The need for mandatory catch and release will be reviewed annually.
Poor conservation status (3)	Less than 60% probability of meeting the conservation limit. Exploitation is unsustainable therefore management action, including mandatory catch and release (for all methods), is required to reduce exploitation.

Conservation Code for 2026 Season

Under the Conservation of Salmon (Annual Close Time and Catch and Release) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 **no fish to be retained before 1st April.**

Under the Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2019, the below assessments have been given for each river for the 2025 season:

Forth District Season	Rod & Line	1st February – 31 st October	Netting	1 st April – 26 th August
	Baits and Lures	1 st June – 26 th August		
Scottish Government	Rod & Line	No retaining salmon before 1st April	Netting	No taking salmon in coastal areas (below Forth Railway Bridge)

Generally	Salmon		Sea Trout		Grayling
	Return all fish before 1 st July		Return all fish before 1 st July		Season opening: 1 December – 31 January
	Return all hen fish		Return all hen fish		Grayling fishing methods are restricted to fly fishing (4lb line) or trotting using a 4lb leader. Bait is restricted to maggot only. No wading. No spinning.
	Return all cock fish over 10lbs (28")		Return all cock fish less than 3lbs		
To aid enforcement and the protection of the wild fishery, proprietors are asked to require permits for all fishing, including brown trout and Grayling if these are available on your fishery.					

The Board aims to achieve 100% catch and release of spring salmon and sea trout across the District. For the latter part of the season the Board is promoting restraint: anglers are advised that the following guidelines outline the maximum number and type of fish that should be taken. It is hoped that many anglers will be satisfied with taking fewer fish than set out.

For individual rivers:

River	Cat	Conservation Code Salmon	Catch & Release Target Salmon	Conservation Code Sea Trout	Catch & Release Target Sea Trout
Allan	Moderate	1 fish per angler per season	90%	1 fish per angler per season	90%
Almond	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Avon	Poor	0	100%	1 fish per angler per season	90%
Carron	Poor	0	100%	1 fish per angler per season	90%
Devon	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Esk	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Leven	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Teith	Moderate	1 fish per angler per season	90%	1 fish per angler per season	90%
Forth	Moderate	1 fish per angler per season	90%	1 fish per angler per season	90%
Tyne & Biel	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Water of Leith	Poor	0	100%	0	100%
Coastal Fishery	Poor	0	100%	0	100%

Crown Estates leases enforce the recommendations, some Local Authority leases enforce the recommendations. These recommendations are in addition to any other regulation or legislation in force.