

PROTECTING SALMON,

SEA TROUT & EELS

Firstly, thanks for taking the time to read this information! Public interest shown in fish native to British waters is crucial to helping us protect these important species, so.....THANK YOU!

Salmon & sea trout and the European Eel are incredibly valuable fish, in terms of their place in the aquatic environment and their value to commercial fishermen. Salmon & sea trout migrate between freshwater and saltwater at different times of their life, and are very susceptible to poor water quality conditions and therefore their presence in rivers and streams is an excellent indicator of good environmental quality overall. However, salmon populations in the UK are currently at dangerously low levels and must be protected wherever possible. Similarly eel populations are regarded as being close to collapse and therefore commercial eel fishermen and the ecology of British waterways in general, are suffering.

The Environment Agency is responsible for enforcing the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975) which puts rules in place to protect these species of fish. This piece of legislation allows these species to be targeted by commercial and recreational fishermen, however it does put restrictions on the timing and method of fishing allowed, to offer the protection these fish need.

We are very much reliant on members of the public (LIKE YOU!!) informing us of situations where these species are potentially being fished for, and taken illegally. I would therefore ask that if upon reading this leaflet, you ever see any activity which you think may interest us, and help us protect salmon, sea trout and eels, that you contact us on the following number:

0800 80 70 60

This number is manned all day, every day and **the information you provide will be treated in confidence** and passed to the local officer for the area straight away.

Salmon & sea trout

There are no salmon or sea trout fishermen in Kent licensed to fish for these fish with nets therefore it is illegal to fish for salmon & sea trout, with anything other than with a rod & line.

As salmon & sea trout swim from saltwater to freshwater to spawn, they gather in estuaries and river mouths, and this rule basically prevents people from using *any type of net* to catch these fish during this vulnerable time of their life. The Environment Agency has prosecuted people in Kent in the past, for catching & taking sea trout using nets on the beach. Because salmon & sea trout swim round the coast trying to find suitable rivers & streams in which to spawn, coastal fishermen fishing for these fish *usually set nets at right angles to, and sticking out from the shore*. We would be very interested in receiving information on the location of nets that are seen set in this way. Nets set in line with the shore however, are normally set to catch other species of sea fish, which swim onto the shore to feed at high tide.

Eels

It is an offence to fish for eels, on the coast or in freshwater, using nets that are not licensed.

Eel fishermen often use 'fyke' nets to fish for eels in rivers, streams, ditches and on the coast. These are tubular nets which fish enter, but from which they are unable to escape. These nets can be entirely circular or 'half-moon shaped' and have a series of metal hoops keeping the body of the net open. The Environment Agency requires fishermen using nets to fish for eels, to have a valid licence. The netsman is issued with a tag every year, which he must attach to the net, and which must be placed on the first metal hoop at the entrance to the net.

Once again, if you see any fishing activity that you feel may be of interest to us, please do not hesitate to call the number below.

0800 80 70 60

Environment Agency