

Salmon Fishing: Proposed River Gradings for 2023 Season

August 2022



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Salmon fishing: proposed river gradings for 2023 season



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Respondent Information Form and Consultation Questionnaire

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:
<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email Address

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
 Publish response only (without name)
 Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
 No

Overview

We are seeking views on the proposed river gradings for the 2023 fishing season, which have been calculated from the annual assessment of the conservation status of wild Atlantic salmon populations in rivers across Scotland.

Additionally, we are seeking views on proposals for achieving higher rates of catch and release and post-catch survivability. These include encouraging voluntary measures and the potential of mandatory measures through legislation change which would apply across the whole of Scotland.

Why your views matter

Your views inform the process of finalising the river gradings for the 2023 fishing season, which are used in the annual amendment to The Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

Additionally, your views on proposals to enhance catch and release and post-catch survivability rates across the whole of Scotland will contribute to policymaking that further protects and restores wild Atlantic salmon populations.

Proposed river gradings for the 2023 fishing season

An [assessment of the conservation status of salmon](#) in inland waters in Scotland is carried out each year and each river or assessment group is assigned a grading depending on the outcome of that assessment. As a result of the latest assessment, we are proposing that the grading of a number of rivers or groups of rivers will change for the 2023 fishing season. A [summary of these changes](#) and a [full overview of the proposed river gradings](#) for the 2023 fishing season are available.

Question 1

Do you agree with the proposed river gradings for the 2023 season?

- Yes
- No
- Other – please explain

If you selected other, please explain

Question 2

Do you have an interest in the river assessment as a whole?

- Yes
- No
- Other – please explain

If you selected other, please explain

Question 3

If you are mainly interested in a specific river or area please select the river(s) or river areas from the following list.

- River Dee SAC
- River Earn
- River Forth
- River Garnock
- River Irvine
- River Spey SAC
- River Tay SAC
- River Tweed SAC
- Other

If your specific river or area is not listed please use the space below to specify your area(s) of interest

I am interested in

Question 4

With reference to the answers you have given in questions 1 – 3 above, please use the space below to tell us more about why you have answered in the way you have.

You may wish to include any additional resources such as catch information to support your views on the assessment or any financial implications you feel may arise from the river grading assigned.

I answered in this way because

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to provide a detailed explanation for their answers to the previous questions. The box is currently blank.

Proposals on measures to enhance catch and release rates

The Scottish Government are also seeking views on what further actions should be encouraged or taken to safeguard wild Atlantic salmon populations. This would include the encouragement of voluntary measures, such as highlighting good practice guidance, to promote higher rates of catch and release and post-catch survivability. Please see the [proposal on achieving higher catch and release rates](#) for further details.

The [official statistics](#) for 2021 were published by the Scottish Government on 1 June 2022. In summary:

- The reported rod catch of salmon (35,693) is the lowest since records began, and 75% of the previous five-year average.
- In the proposed river gradings for the 2023 season 113 out of 173 stocks have been assessed to be in poor conservation status (65%).
- Please see [changes from the 2022 assessment](#) which explains the methodology and the impact of Covid on the assessments in more detail.

These figures form part of a long-term trend in the decline of salmon populations over the past few decades. An overview of this trend and further information on the [stock status of wild Atlantic salmon](#) in Scotland has been provided by Marine Scotland Science for the purposes of this consultation.

Catch and release in 2021 accounted for 95% of the total rod catch of salmon and 99% of the rod-caught spring salmon (taken before 1 May). Catch and release rates have steadily increased since 1994, when such information was first recorded.

Due to the current state of wild Atlantic salmon populations in Scotland, we are considering options with a view to improving salmon stocks. We are seeking your views on whether voluntary catch and release should be more widely encouraged for the whole of Scotland. This would mean that all rivers, regardless of their river assessment grading, would be recommended to practice voluntary catch and release. The aim of this would be to achieve 100% catch and release for the whole of Scotland in order to further protect and restore salmon populations.

Question 5

Do you think 100% catch and release of Atlantic salmon should be encouraged through the use of voluntary measures for the whole of Scotland?

- Yes
- No
- Other – please explain

Please explain your answer

Question 6

Do you think mandatory measures for the whole of Scotland should be introduced to achieve 100% catch and release of Atlantic salmon?

Should voluntary measures be unsuccessful in achieving 100% catch and release across the whole of Scotland, we are also seeking views on the prospect of using mandatory measures in future to achieve 100% catch and release. Mandatory measures would potentially involve amending legislation to prohibit the retention of Atlantic salmon on all rivers in Scotland, regardless of their river grading.

- Yes
- No
- Other – please explain

Please explain your answer

Question 7

If mandatory catch and release measures were introduced across the whole of Scotland, how often should they be re-evaluated?

- Annually
- Every 3 years
- Less often than every 3 years
- Unsure

Please explain your answer

Question 8

Do you have any concerns about being impacted by a 100% catch and release policy, either through the use of voluntary or mandatory measures?

Please give details below

If you would like to submit further evidence to support your answer, please send this to salmonandrecreationalfisheries@gov.scot in .pdf format. Please include your unique ID, which will be provided once you have submitted your response.

Please make sure your file is under 25MB. If you wish to send material larger than 25MB then please break this into two or more files (each under 25 MB) and send these across in multiple emails.

Use and accessibility of information supporting this consultation

We are seeking views on the user experience and accessibility of the [information provided in support of this consultation](#). This will help us to identify what information is most useful to you and how we can improve the presentation and accessibility of this information in the future.

Question 9

How useful did you find the following sources of information to make an informed response to this consultation?

	Very useful	Useful	Slightly useful	Not useful	Not used
Information sources					
Proposed river gradings tables	<input type="checkbox"/>				
River grading information by region (e.g. Clyde Coast)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Interactive summary app for 'Salmon Conservation Regulations' (simple)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Detailed interactive app for 'Salmon Conservation Regulations' (more detailed)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
'Conserving Our Salmon' YouTube video explaining the annual assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Method paper on 'Estimating abundance of adult salmon'	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Method paper on 'Transportation of egg requirements'	<input type="checkbox"/>				
'Summary of conservation regulation methods' paper	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Please use the space below to tell us more about what you found useful from the information sources provided

A large empty rectangular box intended for the user to provide their response.

Question 10

How well did the following sources of information meet your accessibility needs?

	Met my needs	Partially met my needs	Didn't meet my needs	Not used
Information sources				
Proposed river gradings tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
River grading information by region (e.g. Clyde Coast)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive summary app for 'Salmon Conservation Regulations' (simple)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detailed interactive app for 'Salmon Conservation Regulations' (more detailed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Conserving Our Salmon' YouTube video explaining the annual assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method paper on 'Estimating abundance of adult salmon'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method paper on 'Transportation of egg requirements'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Summary of conservation regulation methods' paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to tell us more about how, if any, these sources of information did not meet your accessibility needs

Question 11

What, if any, information did we not provide that would have been helpful in preparing an informed response to this consultation?

Please answer in the space below

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to the question above.

Further Comments

Question 12

Do you have any further comments that you wish to add?

Please provide any further comments here

Thank you for providing your views

Should you wish to provide further information you can contact us via email at salmonandrecreationalfisheries@gov.scot or write to:

Wild Salmon and Recreational Fisheries

Marine Scotland

Area 1B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 9 September 2022.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/marine-scotland/salmon-proposed-river-gradings-2023/>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 9 September 2022.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and Consultation Questionnaire to:

Wild Salmon and Recreational Fisheries
Marine Scotland
Area 1B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at salmonandrecreationalfisheries@gov.scot.

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.



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