

REPORTING ROD FISHING EFFORT



Photo: Desmond Dugan, © Crown copyright, Marine Scotland

Background

Marine Scotland has been compiling data regarding catches of salmon and sea trout since 1952 but, to date, very little information has been collected with regard to rod effort.

Partly in response to feedback from fishery managers, fisheries are now required to collect and report the number of rod days spent fishing for salmon in each month. Information on fishing effort is valuable because it helps with the interpretation of patterns in salmon catch data; changes in reported rod catch could be due, in part, to changes in the amount of time spent fishing for salmon (i.e. 'rod effort').

What is rod effort?

Effort is a measure of how much time was spent fishing, **whether or not fish were caught**. Effort data is particularly informative with respect to assessment of the abundance of underlying stocks and to the sizes of fisheries in different river systems.

How to report number of rod days fished

The number of 'rod days' each month is the number of rods fished each day, regardless of the amount of time spent fishing each day, summed across the whole month. As an example, if 2 rods fish on each of 10 days in a month, then there have been 20 rod days.

Note

This information is required for salmon fishing only. No rod effort data from sea trout or other fisheries are yet required, unless salmon are caught as by-catch. The frequently asked question section provides more information.

Calculating rod days: one angler icon is equal to one rod day

Calculating rod days: one angler icon is equal to one rod day		Weekly total
Week 1		8 rod days
Week 2		2 rod days
Week 3		7 rod days
Week 4		3 rod days

Monthly total = 20 rod days for salmon

Frequently asked questions

Q: What if I only fish for an hour or so in a day?

A: We ask that you record rod effort as the number of rods fished each day, summed across the month – regardless of the amount of time actually spent fishing on the day.

Q: What if I don't catch any fish?

A: Rod days are a measure of fishing effort, and each day that salmon fishing occurs should be recorded, even if no salmon are caught. See guidance below regarding fishing for sea trout and other fishes.

Q: What if there is no fishing for salmon in a month/year?

A: If a catch form is being returned but no fishing for salmon took place in a particular month, zero rod effort should be reported for that month (see example below).

A: If a catch form is not being returned because the fishery is considered 'dormant' (i.e. no fishing takes place for salmon or sea trout in any month and you receive a dormant fishery notification letter), then there is no need to report zero rod effort.

Q: Anglers use various methods other than fly rods which may catch salmon (e.g. trolling, dapping, baiting), should 'rod effort' be recorded in these instances?

A: Yes. 'Rod days' refers to fishing for salmon by any method of angling.

Q: Is only bank fishing to be recorded?

A: No. All rod fishing, whether from the bank or a boat, should be recorded.

Q: If an angler goes out fishing specifically for sea trout (or other game fishes) but catches salmon instead, should rod effort be recorded?

A: Yes. While we recognise that in this case the intention was not to catch salmon, if any salmon were caught then a rod day should be recorded for salmon.

A: If the intention is to catch salmon or salmon and sea trout, effort should be recorded, whether or not fish were caught. If the intention is to catch fish other than salmon, effort should not be recorded unless salmon are caught.

How we will use the data

Rod fishery data form a key part of the assessments which determine the conservation status of river systems under the Salmon Conservation Regulations. We recognise this is a simple measure of effort and we may refine these estimates in the future. The usefulness of extremely accurate rod effort data needs to be balanced with the practicality and feasibility of its collection.

A number of factors may affect the relationship between catch and effort. However, data on rod fishing effort can be used to estimate catch per unit effort or to allocate individual river systems into groups representing heavily fished (higher exploitation rate) to lightly fished (lower exploitation rate) rivers. Our aim is to use this data to increase the accuracy of estimates of the total number of fish returning to rivers and to help explain trends in rod catch data, in line with work undertaken in Ireland, England and Wales.

What you should do

On your annual catch form, report rod effort as the total number of rod days fished for salmon in each month. It is important to report months when fishing did not take place, by recording zero rod days. If you do not already collect such data, you will need to do so.

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding the information in this leaflet, please get in touch at:

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The Law

You should note that, under Section 64 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003, failure to return a completed form within the required timescale, or to make a false statement is an offence.