

## Our position on ...

# New regulations to protect Salmon and Sea trout



June 2018

Eden Rivers Trust is dedicated to improving and protecting the River Eden, its tributaries and lakes for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Salmon is one of the most iconic species of fish to be found in our rivers. Over recent years after careful monitoring of fish stocks, it has been shown that there has been significant decline in once flourishing salmon populations across England to the extent that most of the 42 principal salmon rivers are deemed to be 'At Risk' or 'Probably at Risk', threatening the future of our salmon populations. This decline is reflected in the River Eden catchment where Wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout catches remain significantly below historic levels.

With stocks at such critical levels in many rivers, it is essential that all available steps are taken to reverse the trend and restore populations so that future generations will continue to see salmon and trout in our rivers.

The reasons for the decline of salmon numbers is complex and there is no single solution. In order to improve their survival, the Environment Agency has been working with many partners representing the government, fishing, angling and environmental organisations, including Eden Rivers Trust, to develop the **Salmon 5 Point Approach**.

This Approach includes: improving water quality, river flow, fish passage (targeting barriers to migration) and improving marine survival - increasing the number of salmon returning from the sea to spawn in rivers. The Approach also recognises that that rod and net fishing have a role to play in helping salmon and sea trout populations to recover.

In May 2018, after much consultation, and informed by The Salmon 5 Point Approach, the Environment Agency introduced new regulations for fisheries across England, including for the Solway Firth and River Eden fisheries. These regulations will be in place for ten years with a review after five years.

We are supportive of any measure that helps to improve and protect all wildlife, including fish populations, found in the Eden river catchment for future generations to enjoy. However, we recognise that the new regulations may have an impact on livelihoods and traditional and cherished pastimes.

We believe that, through concerted and co-ordinated efforts of all interested parties, together we can arrest the decline of our salmon and trout populations before it's too late.

## **In summary the new measures are:**

A Net Limitation Order (NLO) for the Solway Haaf Net Fishery of 75 licences. (the previous order limited the number to 105).

### **Byelaws for the Solway Firth Haaf Net Fishery:**

A daily close period from midnight to 6am (previously 10pm to 10am);

Mandatory catch and release of all salmon (in the previous licence conditions limited this to 10 salmon killed per licencee);

Limit of 420 sea trout killed per season (shared amongst licencees);

Removal of the weekly close period (Saturday and Sunday) to allow netting to take place at the weekend from 6am through to midnight.

### **Rod fishery byelaws for the Border Esk and River Eden:**

Mandatory catch and release of all salmon;

A limit of 4 sea trout per season per angler on the Border Esk;

A limit of 2 sea trout per season per angler on the River Eden;

Requirement to return all female sea trout caught on or after 10th September up to and including 30th September on the Border Esk and River Eden.

The measures will be in place for a period of up to 10 years with annual stock assessments undertaken by the Environment Agency. The Agency has also committed to a full review of stock performance and associated fisheries regulations in year 5 (2023).



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