

Salmon

Salmo salar



Description

The Atlantic Salmon is the largest European member of its family and males may reach over 10kg, with much larger specimens in the traditional Scottish rivers. It is a migratory fish and spends time as a juvenile in fresh water, leaving this environment to grow to adulthood at sea. It returns to coastal waters in the spring and summer, moves upstream into our rivers and spawns during the winter months. Adults return to the same river in which they were hatched to continue the life cycle, but most die after spawning.

Salmon is an interesting fish which can adapt to both salt water during its main growth period and back into fresh water to spawn. Whilst most Salmon return to the rivers in which they were hatched after 2–4 years at sea, some Salmon explore estuaries and other river systems. Salmon is an indicator of very high river quality and therefore a symbol of what we should be seeking to improve our rivers.

National Status

Apart from 'traditional' Salmon rivers in the UK, only the Scottish rivers have broadly maintained a sustainable stock over the last century. Other river stocks became extinct or were reduced to seriously low levels due to pollution, loss of habitat and river obstructions. Now, with many rivers having a much improved quality from the efforts of the Environment Agency, fishing clubs and others, Salmon are increasing in many rivers. While it is hoped that water quality will continue to improve, further measures are needed to remove obstacles, that were installed mostly during the past industrial period. Also, possible spawning gravels may contain past contaminants which may hinder breeding.

Local Status

Although currently there are no recent records of Salmon within Barnsley's rivers, there are records quite close within the adjoining River Don, in Doncaster. As river quality continues to improve in Barnsley, it is only a matter of time before Salmon are recorded and, hopefully in the future, breeding.

Legal Status

Salmon is listed on Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive, regulated by the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 (as modified by the Water Act 1989, the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Environment Act 1995) and the Atlantic Salmon Act 1986, in conjunction with by-laws made under these pieces of legislation.

Links with other Action Plans

HAPI6 Rivers

Current Factors Causing Loss or Decline

- Salmon have a complex life and there are many factors which contribute to decline. Within the ocean there are problems such as over-fishing, sea pollution and sea temperatures rising through climate change. River factors include localised pollution, obstructions caused by weirs and culverts, and loss of spawning habitats upstream.

Current Local Action

- There is no current local action, but it is known that local fishing clubs are aware that Salmon may be entering Barnsley's rivers in the near future and that they are concerned with the various problems that may hinder successful colonisation.

Proposed Local Action

- Monitor any progress of Salmon into the River Don and River Dearne.
- Work with the Environment Agency (EA), the Local Authority and relevant fishing clubs to support the success of Salmon colonisation.
- Use Salmon as a species to promote clean rivers in Barnsley.