

Salmon (*Salmo salar*)

DESCRIPTION



The Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) is, like most fish, migratory, but its journey is much longer than most. The adult fish lay and fertilise their eggs in nests dug into gravel riverbeds in the headwaters and tributaries of rivers during the winter.

The eggs hatch out in the spring and the young fish feed on invertebrates for about four years before migrating down river and out to sea where they travel either to the waters off Greenland or to the Arctic Ocean to the East of Iceland where they feed on fish and shrimps, growing very rapidly.

They return one, two or three years later to the same river (and often the same pool) where they were born.

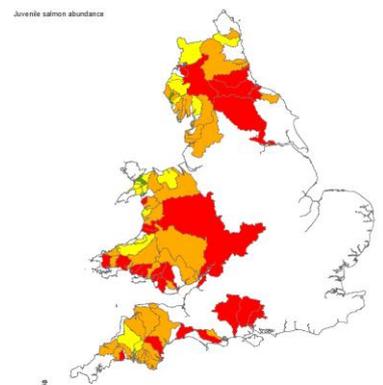
Salmon have been exploited as a source of food commercially and as a prize sport fish. Many of the commercial nets have been bought off by angling interests, but 10,000 salmon were declared caught in 2014 by nets. Anglers released 78% of the 7,500 fish they caught to allow them to go on to spawn.

CONSERVATION ACTION

Salmon were once abundant and widespread in English rivers but in 2014, of England's 42 principal salmon rivers 10 were assessed as being 'at risk' of not achieving their conservation limits in at least four out of five years, 28 'probably at risk' and 10 'at risk'. None was deemed to be 'not at risk'. Of particular concern is the proportion of fish returning from sea which has fallen from around 25% to as low as 5% in the past decade, for unknown reasons.

Because of their extensive geographic range, salmon are vulnerable to a wide range of threats from commercial fishing (including as by-catch), barriers to migration, river and estuarine pollution from agriculture and industry, soil eroded from fields smothering the gravels where they lay their eggs, river dredging, low flows, tidal and hydropower installations, diminishing marine fish stocks and high water temperatures from climate change.

Following a salmon summit in 2015, the Environment Agency has announced a Five Point Approach to restore stocks.



CONTACT DETAILS

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