

ROD & LINE FISHERIES BYELAWS

South West Region

March 2003

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

FISHERIES BYELAWS

About the Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is the leading public agency for protecting and enhancing the environment in England and Wales.

Our vision is a healthy, rich and diverse environment for present and future generations.

We contribute to sustainable development through the integrated management of air, land and water. Sustainable development is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

Specific responsibilities for the Agency are fisheries, conservation, recreation, water resources, pollution prevention and control, waste management, flood defence and navigation.

The South West Region of the Environment Agency, with a population of four million people, covers Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and most of Wiltshire.

Rod Licences

Anyone aged 12 years or over who fishes for salmon, trout (including migratory trout), freshwater fish or eels* in any** water in England and Wales must have an Environment Agency rod fishing licence and permission from the owner of the fishery.

Anglers must carry their rod licence with them at all times while fishing.

*In tidal and coastal waters a licence is not usually required for fishing for eels with a rod and line, however there are some tidal reaches where a licence is required. Details are available from Area offices.
**Except in waters where a General Licence is in force - please check with the owner of the fishery in advance.

Catch Returns

Any person to whom a licence is issued by the Agency to fish by rod and line for salmon or migratory trout shall no later than the 1st day of January in the following year, make a return on a form provided by the Agency giving particulars of dates, locations and time spent fishing and the number and weight of any salmon or migratory trout caught (except in relation to small sea trout, 500g or less, where only the number caught need to be returned) including those returned alive giving details of whether they were caught on fly, spinner or bait, or a statement that no salmon or migratory trout were caught by the licence holder.

Catch returns are used by the Agency to monitor trends in the region's fisheries. The returns are useful indicators of the health of the fishery and the figures assist in directing resources to those areas most in need. They also contribute to the Agency's input to international salmon management, through the NASCO (North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation) and the ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Seas).

How to get your licence

From Post Offices

National rod licences are available from Post Offices in England and Wales, many of which are open outside normal Post Office hours. You can ring the Agency's Warrington Office Tel: 01925 653999 (24 hour service) - except Bank Holidays - to find out your nearest out-of hours Post Office licence outlet.

By post

Licences are also available from some larger fisheries, Regional Environment Agency offices, or by post from:

Environment Agency
National Rod Licence Administration Centre
PO Box 432
Richard Fairclough House
Knutsford Road
Warrington
WA4 1HH
Tel: 01925 653999

Telephone sales

Full annual and junior licences are available by telephone for credit and debit card users. Tel: 0870 1662 662. Lines open daily from 8am - 8pm, except Bank Holidays. A small additional charge will be made. The licence will be valid from the time of the transaction.

Internet Licence Sales

Full, Junior, 8-day and 1-day licences can be purchased online from the Environment Agency website: www. environment-agency.gov.uk/fish.
A small additional charge will be made.

PLEASE NOTE IT IS AN OFFENCE IF, WHILST FISHING, YOU ARE UNABLE TO PRODUCE A VALID ROD LICENCE WHEN ASKED TO DO SO BY AN AGENCY WATER BAILIFF OR OTHER LICENCE HOLDER.

Fisheries Byelaws

The Environment Agency has the role of maintaining, improving and developing fisheries within the South West. The money required to do this comes largely from rod licence fees and grant aid from Government. The region's fisheries are protected by byelaws and the most important are listed here. **This leaflet is for guidance only. It is not intended to be a legal version of the byelaws.**

A full copy of the rod fishing byelaws can be obtained from the fisheries section in the relevant Area office (see inside back cover).

Rod Fishing Seasons

The 'Open Seasons', i.e. the periods when it is permitted to fish, are set out in the table below.

SPECIES OF FISH	FISHERY DISTRICT	MAJOR RIVERS WITHIN DISTRICT	ROD & LINE OPEN SEASON (dates inclusive) Starts	Ends
SALMON	Avon (Devon)	Avon (Devon) Erme	15 Apr 15 Mar	30 Nov 31 Oct
	Axe (Devon)	Axe, Otter, Sid	15 Mar	31 Oct
		Lim	1 Mar	30 Sept
	Camel	Camel	1 Apr	15 Dec
	Dart	Dart	1 Feb	30 Sept
	Exe	Exe	14 Feb	30 Sept
	Fowey & Fal	Fowey, Looe, Seaton, Fal	1 Apr	15 Dec
	Tamar & Plym	Tamar, Tavy, Lynher, Plym, Yealm	1 Mar 1 Apr	14 Oct 15 Dec
	Taw & Torridge	Taw, Torridge Lyn	1 Mar 1 Feb	30 Sept 31 Oct
	Teign	Teign	1 Feb	30 Sept
		Frome (Dorset) & Piddle	1 Mar	31 Aug
		All other rivers in North & South Wessex Areas	1 Feb	31 Aug
MIGRATORY TROUT	Avon (Devon)	Avon (Devon) Erme	15 Apr 15 Mar	30 Sept 30 Sept
	Axe (Devon)	Axe, Otter, Sid	15 Apr	31 Oct
		Lim	16 Apr	31 Oct
	Camel	Camel, Gannel, Menalhyl, Valency	1 Apr	30 Sept
	Dart	Dart	15 Mar	30 Sept
	Exe	Exe	15 Mar	30 Sept
	Fowey & Fal	Fowey, Looe, Seaton, Fal	1 Apr	30 Sept
	Tamar & Plym	Tamar, Tavy, Lynher, Plym, Yealm	3 Mar	30 Sept
	Taw & Torridge	Taw, Torridge Lyn	15 Mar	30 Sept
	Teign	Teign	15 Mar	30 Sept
		All rivers in North & South Wessex Areas	15 Apr	31 Oct

Note: Seasons also apply to minor rivers within each district.

SPECIES OF FISH	FISHERY DISTRICT	MAJOR RIVERS WITHIN DISTRICT	ROD & LINE OPEN SEASON (dates inclusive) Starts	Ends
BROWN TROUT		Camel, Fowey & Fal	1 Apr	30 Sept
		Other rivers in Devon & Cornwall Areas	15 Mar	30 Sept
		All rivers in North & South Wessex Areas	1 Apr	15 Oct
		All other waters in Devon & Cornwall Areas	15 Mar	12 Oct
		All other waters in North & South Wessex Areas	17 Mar	14 Oct
RAINBOW TROUT		Camel, Fowey & Fal	1 Apr	30 Sept
		Other rivers in Devon & Cornwall Areas	15 Mar	30 Sept
		All rivers in North & South Wessex Areas	1 Apr	15 Oct
		Reservoirs, Lakes & Ponds	No statutory close season*	
COARSE FISH (inc GRAYLING & EELS)		All rivers, streams and drains including the Glastonbury Canal	16 Jun	14 Mar
		Enclosed waters - Ponds, Lakes & Reservoirs. All other canals	No statutory closed season*	

* There is no statutory close season for these waters, but some clubs and fishery owners may impose their own close seasons. There may also be a close season in place because of the status afforded to the area as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). If in doubt, check with your local office.

National Salmon Byelaws

New byelaws were introduced in April 1999 to protect spring salmon.

The main points of the byelaws are:

- Catch and release before 16 June - any angler catching a salmon before that date must return it with minimum injury;
- The use of artificial fly or artificial lure only when angling for salmon before 16 June (on some rivers, existing, more stringent local regulations will remain in force i.e. Avon (Hants) and Taw/Torridge).

Voluntary Measures

Catch and release of all salmonids is encouraged and in particular salmon showing red spawning coloration later in the season, many of which will be spring fish. Most owners, clubs and associations operate their own voluntary rules and anglers are advised to check details before fishing.

Permitted Baits

The use of particular baits for fishing is regulated by byelaws and, in some cases, additional restrictions are imposed by the fishing association or riparian owner. The byelaw restrictions are shown in the table below.

FISHERY DISTRICT	SPECIES	BAITS (REAL OR IMITATION)
National	Salmon	Artificial fly or artificial lure only before 16 June
National	All	No crayfish
Avon (Devon)	Salmon & Trout*	No worm or maggot
Axe (Devon)	Salmon & Trout	No shrimp, prawn, worm or maggot. Fly only after 31 July below Axebridge, Colyford
Dart	Salmon Trout	No worm or maggot No shrimp or prawn except below Staverton Bridge No spinning above Holne Bridge Fly only
Exe	Salmon & Trout	No worm or maggot
Taw & Torridge (except Lyn) Lyn	Salmon & Trout Trout	No shrimp, prawn, worm or maggot No spinning after 31 March No worm or maggot before 1 June
Teign	Trout	No worm or maggot before 1 June
Camel, Fowey & Fal	Salmon & Trout	No byelaw restrictions on bait after 16 June
Tamar (Tamar river & tributaries only)	Salmon & Migratory Trout	No worm, maggot, shrimp or prawn after 31 August
North Wessex & South Wessex Areas	Salmon & Migratory Trout	Artificial fly only before 15 May
North Wessex & South Wessex Areas	All species in rivers, drains and canals	No maggot (or pupae), processed product, cereal or other vegetable matter during coarse fish close season**

*All references to 'Trout' include migratory trout and non-migratory trout.
**This restriction only applies to waters where a statutory coarse fish close season is applicable. It does not apply to stillwaters except where there is a close season in place because of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status.

No spinning for trout in waters included within the Dartmoor National Park, the Exe above Exebridge, Otter above Langford Bridge, Torridge above Woodford Bridge, Bray above Newton Bridge, Mole above Alswear Bridge, Little Dart above Affeton Bridge, and the whole of the Okement, Lyn and Barnstaple Yeo.

Artificial baits which spin. When fishing for salmon or trout in the Avon (Devon), Axe (Devon), Exe, Dart, Taw and Torridge and Teign districts, use of any artificial bait which spins is restricted to those with only a single, double or treble hook. The width of the hook must not be greater than the spread of the vanes of the bait.

Any person who takes a fish for use as live bait shall be guilty of an offence unless the fish are retained at and used only in the water from which they are taken.

Use of Other Tackle

Use of float

The use of a float when fishing for salmon or trout in any waters within the Avon (Devon), Axe (Devon), Dart, Exe, Taw and Torridge and Teign districts is prohibited.

Use of gaff

The use of a gaff is prohibited at all times when fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish or freshwater eels.

Use of rods

Maximum number of rods permitted

Species	Rivers, streams, drains & canals	Reservoirs, lakes & ponds
Salmon & Migratory Trout	1 Rod	2 Rods (2 licences required)
Trout (Non Migratory) Char	1 Rod	2 Rods (2 licences required)
Coarse fish & eels	4 Rods (2 licences required)	4 Rods (2 licences required)

Note: The above rod limits are subject to the correct number of rod licences being held.

A salmon and migratory trout licence authorises only one rod per licence when fishing for salmon, migratory trout or non migratory trout or two rods per licence when fishing for coarse fish and eels.

A trout and coarse licence authorises one rod when fishing for non migratory trout or two rods when fishing for coarse fish and eels.

When fishing with multiple rods and lines, rods shall be placed such that the distance between the butts of the end rods does not exceed three metres.

Unattended rods are prohibited for all species in all areas.

Prohibition of use of lead weights

No person shall use any instrument on which is attached directly or indirectly any lead weight (except a weight of 0.06 grams or less, or one of more than 28.35 grams) for the purpose of taking salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels in any waters within the region.

Return of foul hooked fish

It shall be an offence to fail to return immediately all salmon, migratory trout or trout hooked other than in the mouth or throat, to any river, stream, drain or canal.

Kilbury Weir - Prohibited fishing

It is illegal to take or attempt to take by any means fish in any waters within 50 yards below the crest of Kilbury Weir on the River Dart.

MANDATORY BAG LIMITS

Mandatory Bag Limits

RIVER OR AREA	SPECIES	24 HOURS	PERIOD 7 DAYS	SEASON
Taw	Salmon (after 16 June)	2	3	10
	Sea trout	5	15	40
Torridge	Salmon (after 16 June)		2	7
	Sea trout	2	5	20
North Wessex	Non-migratory trout	2	-	-
	Grayling	2	-	-

North Wessex Area

The bag limits set out in the table are imposed by the byelaws. However, some riparian owners or angling associations obtain dispensation to increase their bag limits. Anglers should familiarise themselves with bag limits before fishing. Once a bag limit has been taken the angler may continue fishing for the same species provided that any fish caught are returned without injury. Freshwater fish other than grayling, pike and eels may not be permanently removed from the water.

Devon Area

Any person who has taken the maximum number of either salmon or migratory trout permitted under this byelaw in any period on either the River Taw or River Torridge may continue to fish for fish of that description provided that any fish caught are released immediately back into the river from which they were caught.



Special events were organised in 2002 to encourage juniors and disabled to take up angling

Size Limits

AREA, DISTRICT OR CATCHMENT	MIGRATORY TROUT	NON-MIGRATORY TROUT	GRAYLING
Camel, Fowey, Tamar and Plym	7 inches (18 centimetres)	7 inches (18 centimetres)	-
Avon (Devon), Axe (Devon), Dart, Exe, Taw & Torridge, Teign	10 inches (25 centimetres)	8 inches (20 centimetres)	-
River Lim	-	9 inches (22.5 centimetres)	-
North Wessex (except By Brook)	35 centimetres	25 centimetres	25 centimetres
By Brook & tributaries	35 centimetres	20 centimetres	25 centimetres
South Wessex	35 centimetres	25 centimetres	-

Size Limits

Length to be measured from tip of the snout to the fork or cleft of the tail.

The size limits set out in the table are imposed by the byelaws. Riparian owners and fishing associations may impose further restrictions with which anglers should familiarise themselves before fishing.

These size restrictions do not apply to:

(a) Any person who takes any undersized fish if he/she at once returns same to the water with as little injury as possible.

(b) Non-migratory trout in any waters included within the Dartmoor National Park, the Exe above Exebridge, the Otter above Langford Bridge, the Torridge above Woodford Bridge, the Mole above Alswear Bridge, the Little Dart above Affeton Bridge and the whole of the Rivers Okement, Lyn and Barnstaple Yeo.

Taw & Torridge

From the 1 August to 30 September in any year no person shall take in the River Taw and River Torridge any salmon of a length greater than 70 centimetres.

KEEPNETS, KEEPSACKS & LANDING NETS

Keepnets, Keepsacks and Landing Nets

Any person shall be guilty of an offence if he uses;

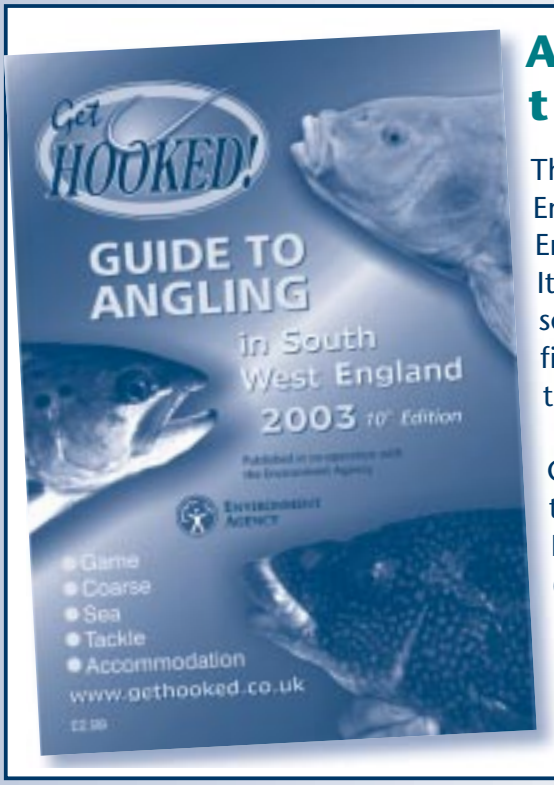
(a) a landing net with any knotted meshes or metallic material; or

(b) a keepnet-
- (i) with any knotted meshes of metallic material; or
- (ii) having any holes in the mesh larger than 25 millimetres internal circumference; or
- (iii) of less than 2.0 metres in length; or
- (iv) with supporting rings or frames greater than 40 centimetres apart (excluding the distance from the top frame to the first supporting ring or frame) or less than 120 centimetres in circumference.

(c) a keepsack-
- (i) not constructed of a soft, dark coloured, non-abrasive, water permeable fabric; or
- (ii) having dimensions of less than 120 centimetres by 90 centimetres if rectangular; or
- (iii) 150 centimetres by 40 centimetres if used with a frame or designed with the intention that a frame be used.

Any person shall be guilty of an offence if he retains more than one fish in a single keepsack at any time.

This byelaw shall not apply to any keepnet or keepsack used for retaining eels which have been legally taken by instruments other than rod and line.



A Guide to Angling in the South West

The Get Hooked Guide to Angling in South West England is a partnership between the Environment Agency and Diamond Publications. It covers coarse, game and sea fishing across the south west - there is a directory of clubs and fisheries, giving species, contact numbers and ticket prices.

Get Hooked 2003 is obtainable by post from the Agency's regional office, PO Box 120, Exeter, Devon EX2 7QA. Please send a cheque (made out to the Environment Agency) or postal order for £3.99 (this includes postage and package). Or visit one of the south west's area offices and buy copies from the area fisheries section.

CONTACTS

Devon Area

Fishery Districts (rivers in brackets): Avon (Avon, Erme); Axe (Axe, Sid, Otter); Dart (Dart); Exe (Exe); Taw and Torridge (Taw, Torridge, Lyn); Teign (Teign). The River Lim is included in the Devon Area.

Tel: 01392 316026
Ask for the Fisheries Section

Cornwall Area

Fishery Districts (rivers in brackets): Camel (Camel, other streams flowing into the sea on the north coast between Marshland Mouth and Lands End); Fowey (Fowey, East and West Looe, Seaton, Tresillian, other streams flowing into the sea on the south coast between Lands End and Rame Head); Tamar & Plym (Tamar, Plym, Tavy, Lynher and Yealm).

Tel: 01208 78301
Ask for the Fisheries Section

North Wessex Area

Catchments: Bristol Avon (including all tributaries), Axe (Somerset), Brue, Parrett, Tone, Yeo and all other rivers, drains and streams flowing into the Bristol Channel between Avonmouth and Foreland Point.

Tel: 01278 484652
Ask for the Fisheries Section

South Wessex Area

Catchments: Hampshire Avon (including all tributaries), Dorset Frome, Dorset Stour, Piddle, Wey, Brit and Char and all other streams flowing into the sea between Christchurch Harbour and Charmouth.

Tel: 01258 483373
Ask for the Fisheries Section

PLEASE TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME - DISCARDED TACKLE CAN INJURE OR KILL WILDLIFE

SOUTH WEST REGION ADDRESSES

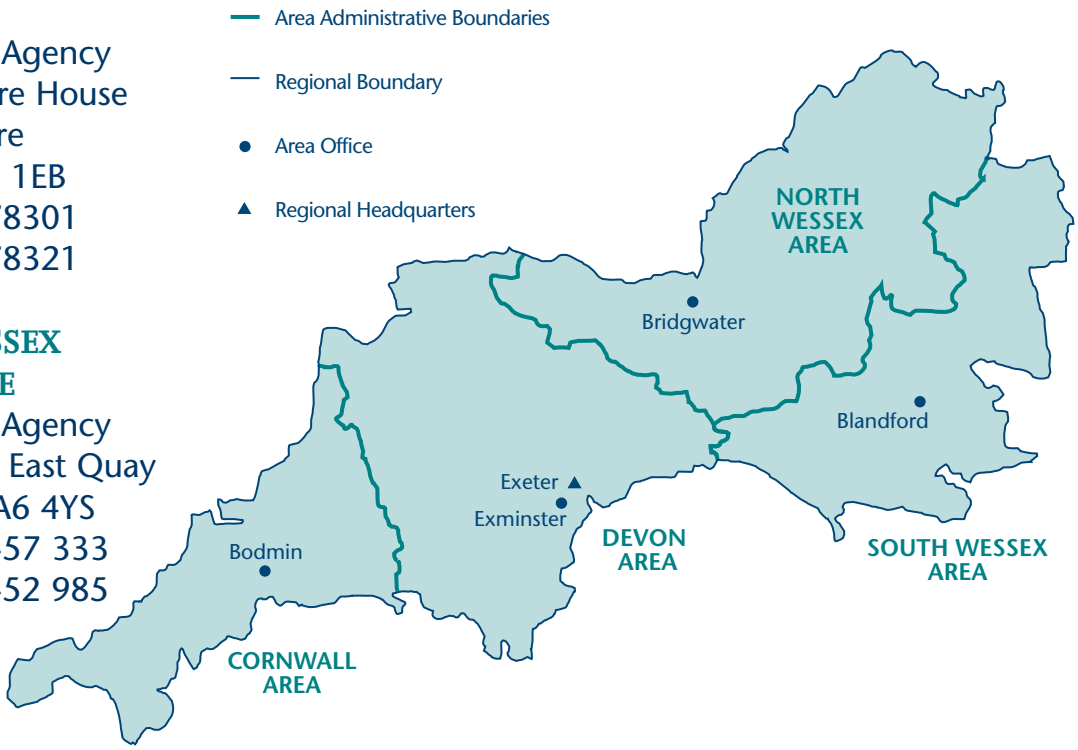
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South West Region
Manley House
Kestrel Way
Exeter EX2 7LQ
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Fax: 01392 444 238

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Environment Agency
Sir John Moore House
Victoria Square
Bodmin PL31 1EB
Tel: 01208 78301
Fax: 01208 78321

NORTH WESSEX AREA OFFICE
Environment Agency
Rivers House, East Quay
Bridgwater TA6 4YS
Tel: 01278 457 333
Fax: 01278 452 985

SOUTH WESSEX AREA OFFICE
Environment Agency
Rivers House
Sunrise Business Park
Higher Shaftesbury Road
Blandford DT11 8ST
Tel: 01258 456 080
Fax: 01258 455 998

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Exminster House
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