



Environment Agency Severn and Trent Catchments - Rod Fishing Byelaws

Summer 2017

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment and make it a better place for people and wildlife.

We operate at the place where environmental change has its greatest impact on people's lives. We reduce the risks to people and properties from flooding; make sure there is enough water for people and wildlife; protect and improve air, land and water quality and apply the environmental standards within which industry can operate.

Acting to reduce climate change and helping people and wildlife adapt to its consequences are at the heart of all that we do.

We cannot do this alone. We work closely with a wide range of partners including government, business, local authorities, other agencies, civil society groups and the communities we serve.

Published by:

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Introduction

Rod fishing byelaws are statutory rules that are put in place by the Environment Agency. They protect migratory and freshwater fish stocks, and the fisheries they support from damaging fishing practices.

Rod fishing byelaws set out when you can fish (open and close seasons); where you can fish; how you can fish; and what fish you can take.

Anyone fishing with rod and line in England and Wales must hold a rod fishing licence (see below) and comply with the byelaws that cover the waters where they are fishing.

Some fisheries byelaws are local, covering specific waters; others apply to the whole of the River Severn and River Trent catchments; and some national byelaws cover all waters in England and Wales. We have identified which are national and regional byelaws for your convenience.

Anyone failing to comply with these byelaws could face prosecution in court and receive a fine of up to £50,000.

This document summarises the rod fishing byelaws that cover waters in the catchments for the Rivers Severn and River Trent (other byelaws cover fishing by nets, traps and other methods). It is not a legal interpretation, but provides a simple guide. Appendix A provides a list of all byelaws applicable to rod fishing.

A full copy of the byelaws can be obtained from the Environment Agency by calling 03708 506 506¹ (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm).

To find out more about fishing regulations, visit www.gov.uk/rod-fishing-rules.

Where to fish and current river level and angling weather, visit www.fishinginfo.co.uk

If you see fishing, netting or trapping that you think is illegal call our incident hotline 0800 807060. (24 hour service). This is a Freephone number; however calls from mobile phones are likely to be charged at network operators' call rates.

Use this number to also report pollutions or if you see dead or distressed fish.

¹ Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone.

Application - Where do the Byelaws Apply?

These byelaws relate to the catchments for the River Severn and River Trent. These catchments are the combined areas of the natural catchments of the River Severn and River Trent and of all the watercourses draining or flowing, directly or indirectly into them. The byelaws apply to anyone fishing with rod and line for salmon, trout, freshwater (coarse) fish, eels, smelt and lamprey in all freshwater fisheries and to a distance of 6 nautical miles at sea.

Byelaws for the River Wye are made and enforced by Natural Resources Wales. Copies can be found at www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/out-and-about/enjoy-the-outdoors-/go-fishing/?lang=en

Many private fisheries set their own rules. These rules may add to the measures provided by Environment Agency byelaws, but they cannot replace or remove them.

Rod licences

For the rules on when you need a licence, how to buy the licence and how much it costs, see:

[Buy a fishing rod licence](#)

The Byelaws - Severn and Trent Areas

When you can fish - Close Seasons

When can I fish for freshwater (coarse) fish?

You cannot fish for freshwater fish where there is an annual close season. The coarse fish close season on all rivers, streams and drains and some canals and stillwaters (see Table 1) is the period from 15 March to 15 June inclusive. *This is a national byelaw.*

There is no coarse fish close season on all other canals and stillwaters except where the sites are Sites of Special Scientific Interest - see Table 1 below. *This is a national byelaw.*

When and where can I fish for eels?

You can fish for eels with rod and line in most fisheries throughout the year - the only exception is during the coarse fish close season on designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) listed in table 1 below..

Where the coarse fish close season applies you may fish for eels provided you do not use a hook with a gape of less than 0.5 inches (12.7mm) and use either artificial or natural fly (which term excludes bloodworms, jokers and other midge larvae), spinners, minnows, worms, prawns or shrimps as bait. You may keep eel in a keepnet or keep sack but you must return them to the water. *This is a regional byelaw.*

When can I fish for trout?

The close season for brown trout and rainbow trout in rivers, and for brown trout in unenclosed stillwaters, is the period from 8th. October to 17th March inclusive. *This is a regional byelaw.*

There is no close season for brown trout in enclosed stillwaters (enclosed stillwaters are those from, and to, which fish cannot swim) and rainbow trout in all stillwaters. *These are national byelaws.*

When can I fish for salmon?

The close season for salmon and migratory trout (in all waters) is the period from 8th. October to the 31st. January inclusive. *This is a regional byelaw.*

Close seasons aim to protect fish stocks from the impacts of angling during the fish breeding season.

We removed the close season for coarse fish from most stillwaters because these are usually in single ownership and the fishery owner is better placed to manage the fish stocks and to impose whatever restrictions are felt to be needed, including non-statutory close seasons.

We removed the close season for brown trout from many stillwaters and for rainbow trout from all stillwaters on the basis that these fisheries were entirely dependent on stocking and removing the close season would pose no risk to wild stocks.

How you can fish

What baits, lures and weights are prohibited?

You must not use any form of lead weight attached to a fishing line other than those of 0.06 grams (approximately a No.8 shot), or less, or 28.35 grams (1 ounce) or more. "Lead weight" does not include lead incorporated into a weighted line, swim-feeder or fishing fly or lure. *This is a regional byelaw.*

You may not use crayfish of any species whether alive or dead (including any part of a crayfish) when fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels in any waters. *This is a national byelaw.*

Where the coarse fish close season applies (see above) and you are fishing for other species you must not use any float or bait (which term includes ground bait) other than artificial or natural fly (which term excludes bloodworms, jokers and other midge larvae), spinners, minnows, worms, prawns or shrimps. *This is a regional byelaw.*

You may not take any fish for use as live bait unless the fish are only retained at and used in the water from where they were taken except where you have already obtained the Environment Agency's consent to introduce live bait from one water to another. *This is a national byelaw.*

Further to the national byelaw above, when fishing with rod and line you must not use or have in your possession intending to use, any live or dead fish, or any fish spawn or natural food of fish (other than bait), from any source into any waters within the catchments for the Rivers Severn and River Trent. You must not transfer any fish (including fish for use as live bait) or fish spawn or natural food of fish from one water to another without having consent in writing of the Environment Agency. You must also abide by any conditions imposed in the written consent. This does not include the use of seafish as bait or preserved dead baits. *This is a regional byelaw.*

When fishing for salmon before 16 June, you may only use artificial fly or artificial lure. *This is a national byelaw.*

Some fishing practices can harm fish and other wildlife:

- *Lead weights can poison swans and other wildfowl;*
- *Native crayfish are rare and protected. Non-native crayfish species can spread crayfish plague, which can wipe out the native species;*
- *Moving live baits between waters can spread fish diseases and damaging non-native fish;*
- *Some fishing baits and methods can remove the option of returning fish alive.*

Can I use a landing net, keepnet, gaff or tailer?

You must not use a gaff or a tailer when fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt, lamprey or eel in any waters. *This is from primary fisheries legislation.*

You can use a landing net as an accessory to fishing with rod and line. If you do, it must not have knotted mesh or a mesh made from a metallic material.

In waters where the close season for freshwater fish applies you must not use a keepnet or keepsack during the period 15th March to 15th June inclusive *This is a regional byelaw.*

You must not keep salmon (including salmon parr) or trout in a keepnet or keepsack *This is a regional byelaw.*

You can use a keepnet to retain your catch, but it must not -

- have a knotted mesh or a mesh made from a metallic material;
- have any holes in the mesh larger than 25mm internal circumference;

- be less than 2.0 metres in length;
- have supporting rings or frames greater than 40cm apart (excluding the distance from the top frame to the first supporting ring or frame) or less than 120cm in circumference.

You may use a keepsack, but it must not -

- be constructed of a material other than a soft, dark coloured, nonabrasive, water permeable fabric;
- be less than 120 cm by 90 cm, if rectangular, or 150 cm by 30 cm by 40 cm if used with a frame or designed with the intention that a frame be used.

You must not keep more than one fish in a single keepsack at any time.

These are all national byelaws.

Some angling equipment used for landing fish can cause physical damage.

Most landing net and keepnets are designed with fish welfare in mind. However, some can harm fish, especially where large numbers or individually large fish are retained.

How many rods can I use and how can I use them?

You may use up to four rods in any waters when fishing for coarse fish or eels.

You may only use a single rod when fishing for salmon, trout or sea trout in any river, stream, drain or canal.

You may use up to two rods when fishing for salmon, trout and other salmonid fish in all reservoirs, lakes and ponds.

Please note: all of the rods that you use at the same time must be licensed.

When fishing with more than one rod, the total number must not exceed four. This means you cannot fish with three or four rods for coarse fish and a further one or two rods for salmon, trout or sea trout.

When fishing with more than one rod, the distance between the butts of the end rods must not exceed three metres.

You must not leave a rod and line with its bait or hook in the water, such that you are unable to take sufficient control of the rod.

These are all national byelaws.

You need to be able to exert control over all the rods you are fishing with. Fishing with too many rods, being too far away from them, or not being able to take immediate control increases the risk of foul or deep hooking of fish.

Catch returns

If you hold a salmon and sea trout rod fishing licence, you must send a catch return to the Environment Agency by 1 January in the following year, stating where, when and how many salmon or sea trout you caught. *This is a national byelaw.*

Please note, your catch return form and instructions on completing it are provided with your licence. For more information and to complete your catch return on-line, please go to <https://www.gov.uk/catch-return>

Catch returns provide important information to help manage salmon and sea trout stocks.

What fish you can take

What salmon and sea trout can I take?

You must not remove any salmon, alive or dead, from any waters before 16 June of any year. Any salmon caught before this date must be returned to the water with least possible injury. (Please note there are restrictions on what baits you may use when fishing for salmon before 16 June - see above.) *This is a national byelaw.*

You may not sell, offer or expose for sale or have in possession for sale any salmon or sea trout which has been taken by rod and line. *This is a national byelaw.*

What trout can I take?

You must not take or kill trout under the following size limits. The size of the fish is measured from the tip of the nose or snout to the fork or cleft of the tail.

- Trout (Except Rainbow Trout) - All waters size limit: 20 centimetres
- Rainbow Trout - The waters of the Rivers Derwent and Amber, including their tributaries, which are above or upstream of their confluence at Ambergate, Derbyshire, (NGR SK 346 515), excluding the stretch of the River Wye from Blackwell Mill near Buxton to Cressbrook Mill (NGR SK 173 727) above or upstream of Ashford-in-the-Water and excluding any reservoir or lake formed by the construction of a dam across the valley of those rivers or across one of their tributaries. - Size limit: 20 centimetres

These byelaws do not apply to any person who takes any immature (undersized) fish unintentionally and returns it at once to the water with as little delay or injury as possible.

What freshwater (coarse) fish can I take?

On rivers, you may take no more than -

- one pike of less than 65 cm per day;
- two grayling of between 30 and 38 cm per day;
- a combined total of fifteen of the following species: barbel, chub, common bream, common carp, crucian carp, dace, perch, pike, roach, rudd, silver bream, smelt or tench (including any hybrids of these species) of less than 20cm per day.

All lengths are measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

These restrictions also apply on all the waters in the Severn and Trent catchments which are subject to the coarse fish close season (see above).

There are no restrictions on the number of other coarse fish you may take.

On stillwaters and canals, you may only take freshwater fish with the written permission of the fishery owner or occupier. Canals are defined as those canals where the coarse fish close season has been removed.

You may keep fish in a keepnet or keep sack before returning them to the water. *This is a national byelaw.*

Can I take any eel or shad?

You may not take any rod caught eel or shad from any waters, including tidal waters.

You may keep eel in a keepnet or keep sack before returning them to the water. Shad must be returned immediately. *This is a national byelaw.*

Where can I fish?

You must not take or attempt to take fish by rod and line within a distance above or upstream of the crests or below or downstream of the toe of the following weirs:-

- 15 metres above and 45 metres below Shrewsbury Weir (NGR SJ 501 131) on the River Severn.
- 15 metres above and 25 metres below Powick Weir (NGR SO 832 524) on the River Teme and Carreghofa Weir (NGR SJ 254 219) on the River Tanat.
- 5 metres above and 15 metres below Tewkesbury Weir (NGR SO 882 328), Maisemore Weir (NGR SO 818 217) and Llanthony Weir (NGR SO 822 182) on the River Severn.
- 15 metres above and 35 metres below Diglis Weir (NGR SO 847 535) on the River Severn

Table 1 - Stillwaters in the Severn and Trent Catchments retaining a close season

County	Water	OS grid reference
Derbyshire	Carver's Rock	(SK 330 227)
	Cromford Canal	(SK 299 569, SK 351 520)
	Hilton Gravel Pits	(SK 249 315)
	Ogston Reservoir	(SK 376 602)
	Morley Brick Pits	(SK 389 418)
Gloucestershire	Frampton Pools	(SO 753 073)
	Soudley Ponds	(SO 662 112)
Hereford and Worcester	Ashmoor Common	(SO 852 467)
	Bittell Reservoirs - excluding Lower Bittell Reservoirs	(SP 018 750)
	Grimley Brick Pits	(SO 840 605)
	Hewell Park Lake	(SP 010 690)
	Upton Warren Pools - excluding The Sailing Lake (SO 913 672)	(SO 935 672)
	Brampton Bryan Park	(SO 360 716)
	Berrington Pool	(SO 509 630)
	Flintsham and Titley Pools	(SO 318 589, SO 325 595)
	Moccas Park	(SO 341 425)
	Hurcott and Podmore Pools - excluding Hurcott Pool	(SO 854 779)
Leicestershire	Blackbrook Reservoir	(SK 458 174)
	Cave's Inn Pits	(SP 538 795)
	Frisby Marsh	(SK 686 174)
	Groby Pool & Woods	(SK 521 083)
	Grantham Canal 790 359)	(SK 747 317, SK
	Barrow Gravel Pits	(SK 568 166)
	Buddon Woods & Swithland Reservoir	(SK 560 145)
	Ashby Canal	(SK 346 099, SK 387 043)

Nottinghamshire	Clumber Park	(SK 622 744, SK 643 773)
	Holme Pit	(SK 536 345)
	Thoresby Lake	(SK 630 703)
	Welbeck Lake	(SK 580 729)
	Attenborough Gravel Pits	(SK 522 341)
	Misson Line Bank	(SK 715 961)
	Chesterfield Canal	(SK 722 821, SK 762 944)
	Kinoulton Marsh & Canal (Grantham Canal)	(SK 677 306, SK 690 305)
Shropshire	Berrington Pool	(SJ 525 072)
	Bomere, Shomere & Betton Pools	(SJ 504 078)
	Brown Moss	(SJ 562 395)
	Cole Mere	(SJ 433 332)
	Fenemere	(SJ 445 228)
	Marton Pool, Chirbury	(SJ 296 027)
	Shelve Pool	(SO 335 979)
	Sweat Mere and Crose Mere	(SJ 434 304)
	White Mere	(SJ 414 330)
	Morton Pool & Pasture	(SJ 301 239)
	Prees Branch Canal (Shropshire Union Canal, Llangollen Branch)	(SJ 496 341, SJ 497 332)
	Montgomery Canal: Aston Locks to Keepers Bridge (Shropshire Union Canal)	(SJ 328 257, SJ 351 287)
Staffordshire	Aqualate Mere	(SJ 770 205)
	Chasewater Heaths including Wyrely & Essington Canal, Anglesey Branch (SK 042 073, SK 046 071)	(SK 039 080)
	Cop Mere	(SJ 802 297)
	Doxey & Tillington	(SJ 906 245)
	Maer Pool	(SJ 789 384)
	Cannock Extension Canal	(SK 019 044, SK 020 069)
Warwickshire	Alvecote Pools	(SK 249 050)
	Brandon Marsh	(SP 385 755)
	Coleshill and Bannerly Pools	(SP 200 860)
	Combe Pool	(SP 392 794)
	Middleton Pool	(SP 190 983)

	Stockton Railway Cutting and Quarry excluding The Big Quarry Pool	(SP 440 650, SO 444 643)
	Ufton Fields	(SP 383 615)
	Ensors Pool	(SP 348 903)
West Midlands	Edgbaston Pool	(SP 054 841)
	Sutton Park	(SP 098 974)
	Swan Pool and the Swag	(SK 040 019)
	Fens Pools	(SO 920 886)

Appendix A - Relevant Fisheries Byelaws and Primary Legislation

Water Authority Lead Weight Byelaws 1987

Midlands Regional Byelaws 1988

National Fisheries Byelaws 1996

National Fisheries Byelaws 1997

National Fisheries Byelaws 2001

National Salmon Byelaws 2009

National Ban on the Sale of Rod Caught Salmon and Migratory Trout Byelaw 2009

National Coarse Fish Close Season (Rod and Line) 2009

Fish Removal (by Rod and Line) Byelaws 2010

National Brown Trout Close Season (Rod and Line) 2010

Section 1, Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1975, amended by Marine & Coastal Access Act, 2009

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