

A Guide to North West Region Byelaws for Fishing with Rod and Line

The Environment Agency has the role of maintaining, improving and developing fisheries within the North West. The money required to do this comes largely from rod licence fees.

This leaflet is for guidance only. A full copy of the byelaws can be obtained from the Environment Agency North West Region, Richard Fairclough House, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1HG.

These byelaws apply to all river catchments throughout the North West, from West Kirby on the Wirral to the English waters of the Solway Firth, and including the Border Esk.

REMEMBER all anglers age 12 years and above must be in possession of a valid Environment Agency rod licence before starting fishing. All fishing belongs to someone and you must have their permission before you start fishing.

Close Seasons

Salmon. The annual close season for salmon (rod and line) shall be the period from and including the 1st day of November to and including the 31st day of January following with the following exception:-

In the River Eden and all rivers, lakes and waters, tributary to or connected with the River Eden the period from and including the 15th day of October to and including the 14th day of January following. (NW2 11/10/89)

Early Season. Any person who removes any live or dead salmon taken by rod and line from any waters or banks without the previous written authority of the Agency before the 16th day of June in any calendar year shall be guilty of an offence. This Byelaw shall not apply to any person who lawfully takes a salmon and returns it immediately to the water with the least possible injury. (NSB5 15/4/99)

Sea trout. The annual close season for fishing for migratory trout with rod and line shall be the period from and including 1st October to and including 31st March following except on the Border Esk and all waters tributary to, or connected with it, where the close season shall be from and including the 16th October to and including the 30th April following. (NW3 25/07/02)

Brown trout. The annual close season for fishing for non-migratory trout other than rainbow trout with rod and line shall be the period from and including the 1st day of October to and including the 14th day of March following. (NW4 11/10/89)

Rainbow trout. The annual close season for fishing for rainbow trout with rod and line shall be the period from the 1st day of October to the 14th day of March following (both dates inclusive) in all rivers, streams, drains and canals of the North West Region. (NW5 14/3/97)

The annual close season for fishing for rainbow trout by rod and line in all reservoirs, lakes and ponds shall be dispensed with, regardless of whether fish can or cannot normally swim from or to other waters. (Nat7 14/3/97)

Char. The annual close season for fishing for char with rod and line shall be the period from and including the 1st day of October to and including the 14th day of March following except in the following waters where the annual close season shall be as stated:

-in Coniston Water, the period from and including the 1st day of November to and including the 30th day of April following.

-in Lake Windermere, the period from and including the 1st day of October to and including the 30th day of April following, provided that it shall be lawful from and including the 15th day of March to fish for char with artificial lures from a moving boat. (NW6 11/10/89)

Coarse Fish. The annual close season for fishing for freshwater fish in rivers, streams and drains shall be the statutory period that is the period from and including the 15th day of March to and including the 15th day of June following. In all other waters there shall be no statutory close season for freshwater fish. (Nat6 14/3/97)

Eels. The annual close season for fishing for eels in non tidal parts of rivers, streams and those parts of rivers canalised for navigation purposes shall be the period from and including the 15th day of March to and including

the 15th day of June following. There shall be no close season for fishing for eels with rod and line in tidal waters. There shall be no close season for fishing for eels with instruments other than rod and line in waters not frequented by salmon and trout. It shall be lawful to fish for eels with a rod and line during the annual close season for rainbow trout. (NW8 11/10/89)

Catch and release for Salmon in Rivers Leven and Crake

On all waters inland of a line drawn across the Leven estuary on the seaward side of the Leven Viaduct near Ulverston in Cumbria no person shall retain any salmon.

This Byelaw applies to all tidal waters, and all freshwater catchments which enter tidal waters, inland of the line described above.

In this Byelaw to “retain” means to catch a fish and not return it at once to the river or other water from which it came with the least possible injury.

Taking fish

Return of foul hooked fish. All salmon and migratory trout hooked otherwise than in the mouth shall be returned to the water as soon as practicably possible and with as little injury as possible. (NW25 11/10/89)

Removal of fish. No person may take or remove from any waters within the area of the Agency without lawful authority any salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels, whether alive or dead. (NW17 11/10/89)

Prohibition of taking undersized fish. No person shall take from any waters within the area any fish of a kind and of a size less than such size as is hereinafter prescribed, that is to say:

Migratory trout	300mm
Brown trout and char	200mm
Chub and barbel	250mm
Grayling, tench, bream and carp	230mm
Roach, perch, rudd, crucian carp and dace	200mm
Gudgeon and ruffe	100mm

The size shall be ascertained by measuring from the tip of the snout to the fork or cleft of the tail.

Provided that this byelaw shall not apply to any person who:

Takes any undersized fish unintentionally if he at once returns to and liberates the same in the water with as little injury as possible.

Takes any undersized fish, other than salmon or trout, keeps the same alive in a keep net and then, on the same day as he took them, returns such fish to, and liberates them in, the same water from which he took them.

Takes any undersized fish other than salmon or trout and uses them as bait on the same day and on the same water from which he took them provided that at any one time he does not have in his possession more than ten such fish alive or dead.

Being the owner or occupier of a fish farm (or the servant or the agent of any such owner or occupier) takes any undersized fish from that fish farm. (NW19 11/10/89)

Bait

Baiting. In or on the following named lakes:-

Windermere, Coniston, Wastwater, Ennerdale Water, Crummock Water, Buttermere, Loweswater, Bassenthwaite, Derwentwater, Brotherswater, Ullswater, Red Tarn, Haweswater and Thirlmere;

(a) use of any dead or alive freshwater fish, salmonids or eels as bait is prohibited; and

(b) possession of any live freshwater fish, salmonids or eels with the intention of using them as bait is prohibited.

During the period from and including the 15th day of March to and including the 15th day of June in any year in the following lakes:-

Windermere, Coniston, Wastwater, Ennerdale Water, Crummock Water, Buttermere, Loweswater, Bassenthwaite, Derwentwater, Brotherswater, Ullswater, Rydalwater and Grasmere;

(a) fishing with maggots, their pupae or imitations thereof is prohibited; and

(b) the use of the baits specified in (a) above as lures or baits not on or attached to a hook is prohibited.

During the period from and including the 15th day of March to and including the 15th day of June in any year in rivers, streams and those parts of rivers canalised for navigation:

- (a) fishing will only be allowed with minnow, worm, shrimp, prawn or artificial flies or lures; and
(b) the use of any lure or bait not on or attached to a hook is prohibited. (NW18 25/07/02)

Early Season. Any person who fishes for, takes or attempts to fish for or attempts to take any salmon with rod and line by any means other than an artificial fly or artificial lure before the 16th day of June in any calendar year shall be guilty of an offence. (NSB6 15/4/99)

Worm fishing. No person shall, excepting as hereinafter provided, use in fishing for salmon or trout a worm baited on more than a single hook and such hook shall not exceed 40 mm in length overall nor 15 mm in width of gape and the weight or weights used to sink the hook shall not in any case exceed 30 g in the aggregate; provided that a tackle of two or three hooks may be so used if tied one above the other upon a single strand of gut or other artificial substitute material and if each of such hooks does not exceed 15 mm in length and is not more than 8 mm in width of gape. (NW23 11/10/89)

Tackle

Use of rods. No person shall fish with more than one rod and line at the same time when fishing for salmonids in all rivers, streams, drains and canals. No person shall fish with more than two rods and lines at the same time when fishing for salmonids in all reservoirs, lakes, and ponds. No person shall fish with more than four rods and lines at the same time when fishing for coarse fish or eels. When fishing with more than one rod and line at the same time, the aggregate number shall not exceed a total of four. 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. (Nat8 14/3/97)

Keep Nets. On rivers, streams, those parts of rivers canalised for navigation purposes and in the following lakes, no person shall use a keep net or any other means of retaining any kind of fish during the statutory close season for coarse fish:- Windermere, Coniston, Rydal Water, Grasmere, Ullswater, Brothers Water, Bassenthwaite, Derwentwater, Loweswater, Crummock Water, Buttermere, Ennerdale Water and Wastwater. (NW20 11/10/89)

Keepnets, keepsacks and landing nets. Any person shall be guilty of an offence if, after 1st April 1998, he uses:- a landing net with any knotted meshes or meshes of metallic material; or a keepnet-(i) with any knotted meshes or meshes of metallic material; or
(ii) having any holes in the mesh larger than 25mm internal circumference; or
(iii) of less than 2.0 metres in length; or
(iv) with 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. a keepsack-(i) not constructed of a soft, dark coloured, non-abrasive, water permeable fabric; or
(ii) having dimensions of less than 120cm by 90cm if rectangular; or
(iii) 150cm by 30cm by 40cm if used with a frame or designed with the intention that a frame be used.

Any person shall be guilty of an offence if, after 1st April 1998, 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. (Nat5 16/02/98)

Size of hooks and weight of lures. No person shall use in fishing with rod and line for salmon or trout after the 31st day of August in any year double, treble or multiple hooks any of which exceed 8 mm gape provided that this shall not apply to a person fishing with an artificial fly not exceeding 15 g in weight.

No person shall use in fishing with rod and line for salmon or trout after the 31st day of August in any year any lure or weight which (together or singly) exceed 30 g in weight.

The provisions of this byelaw shall not apply to the following listed rivers and all rivers lakes and waters tributary to or connected with those rivers:- Rivers Eden, Esk (Border), Derwent, Ellen, Waver, Wampool, Annas, Bleng, Esk, Mite, Irt, Calder and Ehen nor to fishing for char in lakes Windermere, Ennerdale, Coniston, Rydal Water and Grasmere. (NW24 11/10/98)

Use of lead weights. (1) Subject to paragraph (2) below, no person shall use for taking salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels in any waters within the Agency's Area any instrument to which is attached, directly or indirectly, any lead in the form of a lead weight.

(2) Paragraph (1) above does not prohibit the use of a lead weight of 0.06 grams or less (No.8 shot), or of more than 28.35 grams (1 oz). (NW27 11/10/89)

Use of a Gaff. The use of a gaff is prohibited at all times when fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish or freshwater eels. (Nat4 14/03/97)

Catch Returns

Migratory Salmonid 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 not 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, the locations and the time spent fishing and the number and weight of any salmon or migratory trout caught (except in relation to small sea trout (500 g or less) where only the number caught need 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. (Nat3 18/12/96)

Location

Fishing near weirs. No person shall, without the previous consent in writing of the Authority, during the period between the 30th day of September and the first day of the salmon close season for rod and line in any year, take or attempt to take by any means, any fish within a distance of 20 metres above and 50 metres below the crest of any man-made construction which impounds water in the rivers and streams of the River Ribble catchment upstream of the Naze at Freckleton (excluding the River Darwen, River Calder and the River Douglas), and in all rivers and streams north of the Ribble catchment.

In respect of the undermentioned weirs no person shall at any time take or attempt to take by any means, any fish within a distance of 20 metres above and 50 metres below the crest of the said weirs:-

Branthwaite Weir	River Marron;
Calder Hall Pumphouse Weir	River Calder;
Stramongate Weir	River Kent;
Holmehead Weir	River Caldew;
Cummersdale Weir	River Caldew;
Buckabank Weir	River Caldew;

and in respect of the undermentioned weir no person shall at any time take or attempt to take by any means, any fish within a distance of 20 metres above and 75 metres below the crest of the said weir:-

Ennerdale Mill Weir	River Ehen;
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No person shall at any time without the prior consent of the Authority in writing, take or attempt to take by any means any fish within a fish pass or within a 5 metres radius of either the entrance to or exit from any fish pass. (NW22 11/10/89)

Prohibition of fishing in certain waters in Kendal. The use for taking salmon, trout freshwater fish or eels of any instrument in such part of the River Kent as lies between Victoria Bridge and its confluence with the former Dockray Hall mill race situated 400 metres upstream of Victoria Bridge in the Borough of Kendal by a person fishing from the right (westerly) bank of the said river at any time is prohibited.

This byelaw shall not apply to fly fishing with rod and line provided that no weighted device is attached to or incorporated in the line, cast or hook. (NW26 11/10/89)

Skerton Weir. No person shall at any time take or attempt to take by any means any fish between the crest of Skerton Weir (including the whole of the fish pass) on the River Lune and the four black and white marker posts placed on an imaginary line drawn across the river between national grid references SD4803 6307 SD4810 6311 SD4816 6320 and SD4827 6320. No Person shall at any time take or attempt to take by any means any fish in the area of the River Lune between the four black and white marker posts placed on an imaginary line drawn between national grid references SD4803 6307 SD4810 6311 SD4816 6320 and SD4827 6320 and the three red and white marker posts placed on an imaginary line drawn between national grid references SD 4812 6292 SD4818 6298 and SD4825 6296. This Byelaw shall not apply to fly fishing with rod and line using a single hook provided that no weight or weighted device is attached to or incorporated in the line cast or hook and that the hook is not more than 12 mm in width of gape. (NW-15/02/79)