



DEVERON BOGIE ISLA

The River Deveron *Voluntary* Code for Migratory Fish

Since the coming into force of the Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001, the River Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board has been under pressure from a number of quarters to apply for legal bans on methods of fishing and/or the imposition of bag limits. In the first instance, however, the Board hopes that its objectives can be attained by proprietors adopting the following 'Voluntary' Code.

Restraint

All anglers should exercise restraint –

- as part of their inherent respect for **salmo** salar;
- in recognition of the fact that the species is under threat over much of its range;
- to avoid accusations that anglers are 'fishmongers', interested only in boasting of the numbers of fish which they catch;
- out of consideration for other anglers.

As an indication of what is meant by 'Restraint', in this context it is felt that any angler should be well satisfied with **one or, at most, two fish** to take home at the end of a good day's fishing. There will, of course also be bad days when nothing is caught.

The limitations of catch and release

'Catch and Release' is no excuse for landing more than the one or two fish referred to above. It goes without saying that any fish unfit for the table should, of course, be returned but, that apart, the returning of a fish should not be regarded as the **equivalent** of not catching it.

- The fish has obviously been stressed and, if returned in other than optimum conditions, it may not survive and/or achieve spawning success.
- Having once taken a lure, the fish is **much** less likely to take the lure of **any** other angler. According to statistics from the Tweed the chances are less than 4%.
- The landing and returning of significant numbers of fish in pristine condition exposes the sport to criticism by the anti-field sports lobby and, moreover, can give a false impression of the overall health of the stocks.
- The intrinsic worth of each individual fish should never be lost sight of and there is always the option of stopping or, at least, reducing the catch effort.

Suggested method of exercising restraint

It is suggested that the best way of exercising Restraint is to adopt the method of fishing which is best calculated to bring to the bank the one or two fish referred to above but no more than that. In this connection it is well known that spinning and/or worm is considerably more efficient than fly in a coloured water on the Deveron and that the River is particularly prone to colouring up after rain. There is accordingly a risk that spinning and/or worm, if over employed, will land more fish than is appropriate in terms of the foregoing recommendations. There is also the problem that

coloured or stale fish on a worm can seldom be returned successfully. **Prawns and shrimps (artificial or otherwise) are already illegal.**

As stated above, the Board is not, at present, minded to seek a legal ban of any **other** fishing method but anglers are urged to give more thought than in the past to the method which they select and to the possibility of an early cessation of **the** fishing **day** if they choose the method which is most productive.

Tackle

No gaffe or knotted nets should be used and no fly or lure should have more than one hook or set of hooks (either double or treble).

Sea trout

The numbers of sea trout entering the River have fallen drastically in the last ten years or more. Moreover they are thought to be even more susceptible to injury through stress or handling than are salmon. Anglers are accordingly asked to think carefully before deciding to target them although it is recognised that in very low water other migratory fish (salmon and grilse) may not be available as an alternative. Whether or not targeted, all, or as many as possible, should be returned to the River with maximum care.

Spring Salmon

It is possible that early running salmon form, to some extent, a discrete or separate stock and there is no doubt that the numbers of such fish have declined greatly in Scottish Rivers over recent years. To make matters worse, the numbers in the Deveron have never been high. To aid their conservation anglers are asked to exercise maximum restraint and to take, if any, only the very occasional fish.

Conclusion

In tendering the foregoing advice, which the Board hopes will be followed, the Board is conscious that there will be those who disagree with it. This is inevitable. Many different views are honestly held about our sport and no Code could satisfy everyone. That said, in promulgating the above advice the Board has tried to steer a middle way and to borrow from the whole spectrum of opinions expressed in the past. It accordingly hopes that the advice now given will command the respect of all concerned.