

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) is an inter-governmental Commission established in 1984 to promote the conservation, restoration, enhancement and rational management of salmon stocks in the North Atlantic Ocean through international cooperation, taking into account the best available scientific advice. The member Parties are Canada, Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland), the European Union, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Further details about the Organization and additional copies of these guidelines can be obtained from:

NASCO

11 Rutland Square
 Edinburgh EH1 2AS
 Scotland
 Tel: Int (44) 131 228 2551
 Fax: Int (44) 131 228 4384

Approximate conversion values:

Length cm	Length inches	Approx weight kg	Approx weight lbs/oz	Length cm	Length inches	Approx weight kg	Approx weight lbs/oz
47	18.5	1.16	2 9	79	31.1	5.40	11 14
48	18.9	1.23	2 11	80	31.5	5.61	12 6
49	19.3	1.31	2 14	81	31.9	5.82	12 13
50	19.7	1.39	3 1	82	32.3	6.03	13 5
51	20.0	1.48	3 4	83	32.7	6.25	13 12
52	20.5	1.56	3 7	84	33.1	6.48	14 5
53	20.9	1.65	3 10	85	33.5	6.71	14 13
54	21.3	1.75	3 14	86	33.9	6.95	15 5
55	21.7	1.85	4 1	87	34.3	7.19	15 14
56	22.0	1.95	4 5	88	34.6	7.44	16 6
57	22.4	2.05	4 8	89	35.0	7.69	16 15
58	22.8	2.16	4 12	90	35.4	7.95	17 8
59	23.2	2.27	5 1	91	35.8	8.21	18 1
60	23.6	2.39	5 4	92	36.2	8.48	18 11
61	24.0	2.51	5 8	93	36.6	8.76	19 5
62	24.4	2.63	5.13	94	37.0	9.04	19 15
63	24.8	2.76	6 1	95	37.4	9.33	20 9
64	25.2	2.89	6.6	96	37.8	9.62	21 3
65	25.6	3.03	6 11	97	38.2	9.92	21 14
66	26.0	3.17	7 0	98	38.6	10.23	22 9
67	26.4	3.31	7 5	99	39.0	10.54	23 4
68	26.8	3.46	7 10	100	39.4	10.86	23 15
69	27.2	3.62	8 0	101	39.8	11.19	24 10
70	27.6	3.77	8 5	102	40.2	11.52	25 6
71	28.0	3.94	8 11	103	40.6	11.86	26 2
72	28.3	4.10	9 0	104	40.9	12.20	26 14
73	28.7	4.27	9 7	105	41.3	12.55	27 11
74	29.1	4.45	9 13	106	41.7	12.91	28 7
75	29.5	4.63	10 3	107	42.1	13.27	29 4
76	29.9	4.82	10 10	108	42.5	13.64	30 1
77	30.3	5.01	11 0	109	42.9	14.02	30 14
78	30.7	5.20	11 7				

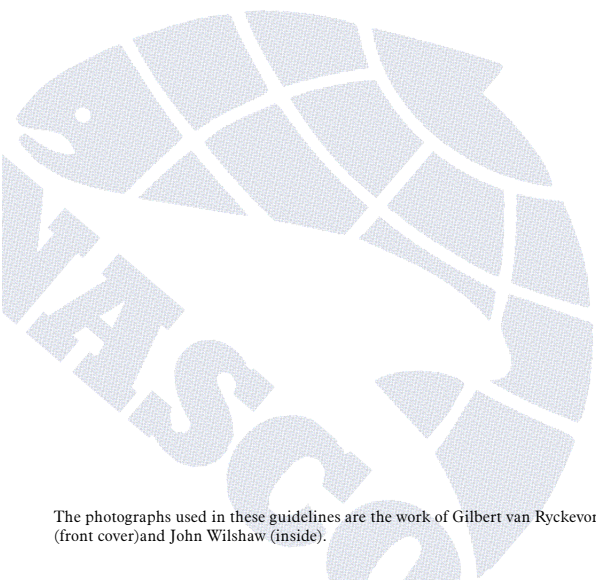
Note: The weights given in this table in pounds (lbs) and ounces (oz) have been rounded to the nearest ounce. Source: Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department.

GUIDELINES ON CATCH AND RELEASE



NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON
 CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION
 ORGANISATION POUR LA
 CONSERVATION DU SAUMON
 DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

The photographs used in these guidelines are the work of Gilbert van Ryckevorsel (front cover) and John Wilshaw (inside).



Introduction

In response to concern about stock levels, catch and release is being practised in a number of countries as a measure to reduce fishing mortality in recreational fisheries. To be of value, Atlantic salmon which have been caught by anglers, handled and then released must survive without a substantial reduction in fitness. While further studies are needed to assess the effects of catch and release (e.g. on salmon caught early in the season) the research to date indicates that the survival following catch and release can be high, although survival is influenced by water temperature (e.g. studies have shown that at water temperatures greater than 18°C mortality can exceed 30%). Fish which have been played quickly and handled gently will have the best chance of surviving. Where the intention is to return Atlantic salmon to the water after capture the following guidelines should assist in conservation efforts.

In many countries, kelts and species other than salmon caught while salmon angling are released. The application of these guidelines to the treatment of these fish should also improve their chances of survival following release.

The decision as to whether, and if so where and when, catch and release is appropriate should be made by those managing the specific fishery concerned in the light of all the known factors about that particular stock. The publication of these guidelines and their

adoption by NASCO does not imply that NASCO endorses catch and release in any particular circumstances.

Type of Gear

Artificial flies should be used since fish caught by this means are less likely to suffer serious damage than fish caught using baited hooks or lures.

Small, barbless hooks should be used since they do less damage, are easier to remove and reduce handling time which can be an important factor influencing survival. Treble hooks should not be used.

Gaffs and tailers should not be used if the fish are intended for release. If necessary a large landing net made from non-abrasive netting and with small meshes should be used.

The fishing gear used should be strong enough to enable the fish to be brought in quickly, taking account of the prevailing conditions and the possible size of fish that might be caught.

Bringing the Fish In

If a fish is caught it should be brought in quickly by keeping pressure on it until it can be guided into quiet water for quick release.

Releasing the Fish

Fish intended for release should be kept in the water. Exposing a fish to the air for even a short period, for example to take a photograph, can significantly reduce

its chance of survival.

The weight of the fish should be estimated from its length so as to avoid removing the fish from the water. The table overleaf gives approximate conversion values. Where possible, conversion tables should be developed for appropriate river stocks.

Handling of the fish should be minimised but when necessary the fish should be gently supported from beneath but must not be squeezed or held by the gills.

If the hook cannot be removed, the leader should be cut close to the hook prior to release.

After removing the hook, or cutting the leader if the hook could not be removed, the fish should be supported in the water facing into the current and allowed to recover until it swims off.

Fish which have suffered serious damage (hooked in the gills or eyes or bleeding heavily) should be retained in preference to lightly hooked fish unless their retention contravenes local or national regulations.

The Benefits

The evidence we have suggests that if fish are handled according to these guidelines, most of them will survive. Carefully releasing fish rather than retaining them can therefore make a real contribution to conservation.