

Photo: Steffan Jones

Sea Trout

Protection and Preservation

What is a Sea Trout?

English and Welsh rivers were colonised by sea trout at the end of the last Ice Age, and their descendents are the populations of brown trout and sea trout we know today (both *Salmo trutta*). Resident and migratory characteristics have developed within individual catchments, so that some fish now remain permanently resident (brown trout), some always migrate (sea trout) and others can do either, depending on circumstances. It is believed that both genetics and environmental issues, such as habitat and available food, play a part in whether or not a trout migrates to sea.



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Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association
The governing body for game angling in Wales!

SALMON & TROUT ASSOCIATION
Game anglers for fish, people, the environment



Why do Sea Trout require Protection?

At the 1st International Sea Trout Symposium at Cardiff University in July 2004, four key issues emerged as being vital to the future of our sea trout stocks:

- Sea trout utilise tiny spawning streams, but these are the very habitats most at threat from unsympathetic land use and agriculture.
- Finnish sea trout stocks have been savaged by fish being accidentally caught in the coastal white fish gill-net fishery. The UK's coastal waters are exploited by bass gill-netters, and the potential threat to sea trout is obvious.
- Larger female sea trout are often multiple repeat spawners with a potential to deposit many eggs over their lifetime, so maximising their contribution to local stocks. They have proven their fitness to survive in both the river and the sea and so contain important genes to pass on to their progeny. Protection of larger fish is therefore vital.
- Some scientific opinion suggests that salmon are on the edge of their viable range in the southern half of England and Wales. If our climate becomes warmer, as is widely predicted through global warming, sea trout will also be vulnerable to the resulting environmental pressures, such as droughts, abnormal winter flows, inevitable changes to their growth/life history and, weakened by sub-lethal levels of pollution while in rivers, they might be unable to survive the additional stress of migrating from freshwater into the marine environment.

What can you do to help?

- Policies to protect spawning habitat and the control of coastal netting are matters best dealt with at national level by influencing legislation and byelaws. Joining a national organisation is an excellent way of helping this work (see organisations on page 4).
- Locally, you can help by supporting the work of Rivers Trusts - contact the Association of Rivers Trusts or Afonydd Cymru for further information.
- Anglers can help conserve sea trout stocks by showing restraint in the number of fish they kill. A 'large' sea trout will vary from river to river but as a rule, we believe that all fish over 5 lbs are best released unharmed to the water, and this size limit should be reduced in areas where smaller sea trout are the norm.
- Finally, if you see a pollution incident, or anything else which you feel could be detrimental to fish stocks in rivers or lakes, contact the Environment Agency Emergency number: 0800 807060



Photo: Dave Mee

Sporting Value

Sea trout are superb sporting fish, highly prized by game anglers throughout England and Wales. Whereas many rivers have seen a decline in salmon runs, sea trout populations have generally fared rather better and, in several areas, their value to anglers and the local economy now exceeds that of salmon. However, warning signs have recently appeared which suggest that sea trout are also under pressure. Therefore, protective measures taken now might avert a future collapse in stocks.

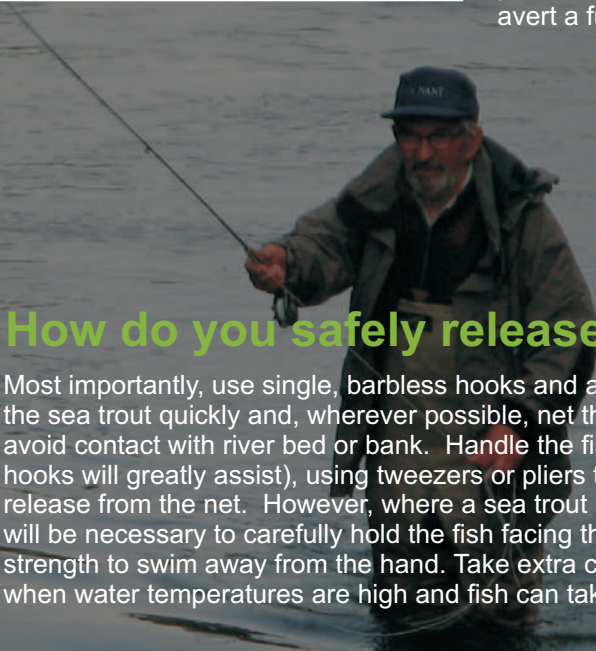


Photo: Moe Morgan

How do you safely release a Sea Trout?

Most importantly, use single, barbless hooks and as strong a tippet as feasible. Play the sea trout quickly and, wherever possible, net the fish in water deep enough to avoid contact with river bed or bank. **Handle** the fish sparingly (this is where barbless hooks will greatly assist), using tweezers or pliers to remove the hook, and then release from the net. However, where a sea trout has been played to exhaustion, it will be necessary to carefully hold the fish facing the current until it regains sufficient strength to swim away from the hand. Take extra care during the summer months when water temperatures are high and fish can take longer to recover.



Habitat improvement

This example shows how the creation of buffer zones reduces impact from farm stock and quickly returns a stretch of river to a more natural state.

Don't forget to report your catch!

Catch statistics are a vital tool in determining the local and national trends in sea trout populations. Don't forget to fill in the returns (for both killed and returned fish) on the back of your Environment Agency Migratory Fish Licence and send back to the address supplied. This should also include nil returns, as fishing effort plays an important part in the Environment Agency's current methodology for sea trout stock assessment, as it is based on trends in catch per licence day.

Based on the latest available rod catch and effort data, all rivers would benefit from increased catch and release of sea trout, although those under particular pressure include:

South West: Otter, Dart, Fowey, Torridge, Camel
North West: Ribble, Lune, Cumbrian Esk, Derwent, Border Esk, Eden
Wales: Tawe, Teifi, Dwyfawr, Tywi, Ogmore, Loughor, Ogwen

Research

Finally, several sea trout projects are now underway, including the Celtic Sea Trout Project (www.celticseatrout.com). Some of these may require anglers to contribute scale samples and, although this will be on a voluntary basis, your assistance wherever possible would be greatly appreciated.

Further information

Salmon & Trout Association	www.salmon-trout.org
Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association	www.wstaa.org
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Association of Rivers Trusts	www.associationofrivertrusts.org.uk
Afonydd Cymru	www.afonyddcymru.org



Sewin

eu hamddiffyn a'u cadw

Beth yw Sewin?

Daeth sewin i afonydd Cymru a Lloegr ddiwedd yr Oes Iâ ddiwethaf, a'u disgynyddion hwy yw'r brithyllod sydd mor gyfarwydd i ni heddiw. Mae rhai'n aros yn eu dalgylch yn barhaol (brithyllod afon), rhai wastad yn ymfudo i'r môr (sewin), a gall eraill ymfudo neu beidio, yn ôl yr angen: ond yr un rhywogaeth, *Salmo trutta*, ydynt. Credir fod a wnelo etifeddeg a'r amgylchedd (natur y cynefin a faint o fwyd sydd ar gael) â phenderfynu a yw brithyll yn ymfudo i'r môr ai peidio.



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Pam mae angen amddifyn sewin?

Yn y Gynhadledd Brithyllod Morol Ryngwladol gyntaf ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd yng Ngorffennaf 2004, penderfynwyd fod pedwar pwnc yn hanfodol ar gyfer dyfodol stociau sewin:

- Mae sewin yn defnyddio nentydd silio bychain bach, ond dyma'r union gynefinoedd a fygythir mwyaf gan ddihidrwydd defnyddwyr tir a chan amaeth.
- Mae stociau sewin y Ffindir wedi dioddef yn ofnadwy oherwydd eu dal yn rhwydi tagell pysgodfa pysgod gwynion y glannau. Gosodir rhwydi tagell ar gyfer draenogiaid hyd lannau'r DU, ac y mae bygythiad hynny i sewin yn amlwg.
- Dichon i sewin benywaidd mwy silio sawl gwaith, bwrw llawer o wyau yn ystod eu hoes, a chyfrannu'n helaeth at stociau lleol. Wedi dangos y gallant oroesi yn nŵr hallt neu groyw, mae'n bwysig eu bod nhw'n trosglwyddo'u genynnau i'w hepil. Felly rhaid amddifyn pysgod mwy.
- Ym marn rhai gwyddonwyr, mae eogiaid ar ymyl eithaf eu tiriogaeth yn hanner deheuol Cymru a Lloegr. Os bydd ein hinsawdd ni'n cynhesu, fel y rhagwelir oherwydd cynhesu byd-eang, bydd sewin hefyd yn agored i'r pwysau amgylcheddol canlyniadol, megis sychderau, llifoedd annormal yn y gaeaf, a newidiadau anorod yn eu twf a'u cylchedd bywyd. Gyda digon o lygredd yn afonydd i'w gwanhau (os nad eu lladd), efallai na fydd modd iddynt oroesi straen ychwanegol ymfudo o ddŵr croyw i ddŵr hallt.

Beth allwch chi'i wneud i helpu?

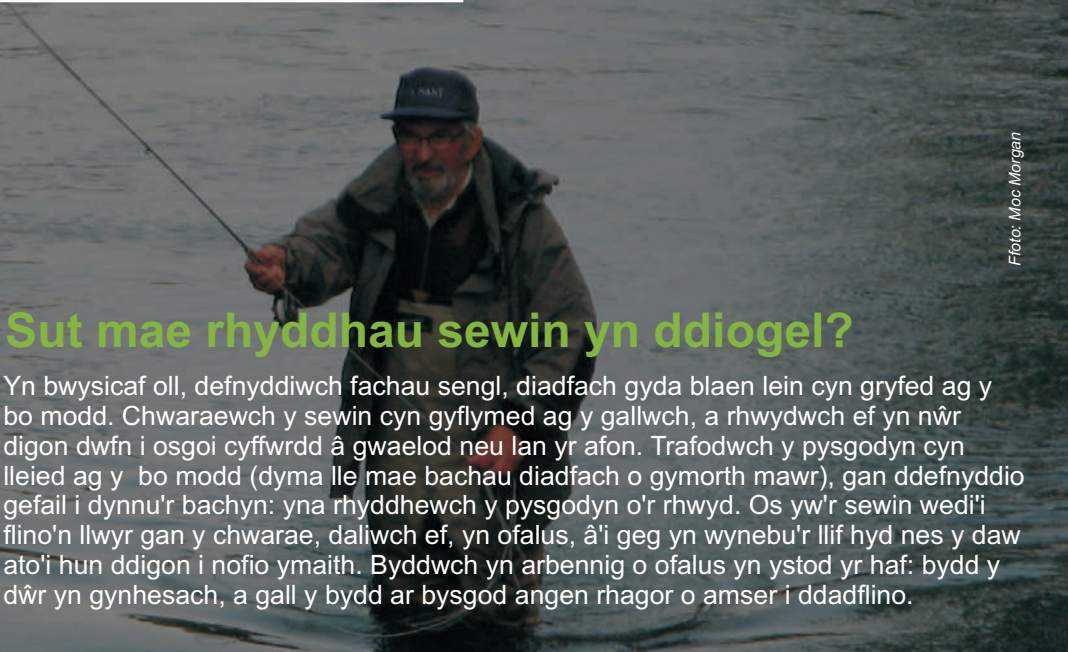
- Gorau delio â pholisïau amddifyn cynefin silio a rheoli rhwydo hyd y glannau ar raddfa genedlaethol, trwy ddylanwadu ar ddeddfwriaeth ac is-ddeddfau. Mae ymuno â chorff cenedlaethol yn ffordd wych o helpu'r gwaith hwn (gweler cymdeithasau ar tudalen 8).
- Yn lleol, gallwch helpu trwy gefnogi gwaith Ymddiriedolaethau Afon. Cysylltwch â'r Gymdeithas Ymddiriedolaethau Afon neu ag Afonydd Cymru am ragor o wybodaeth.
- Gall genweirwyr helpu cadw stociau sewin trwy beidio â lladd cymaint o bysgod. Gall maint sewin "mawr" amrywio o afon i afon, ond yn gyffredinol credwn mai gorau rhyddhau pob pysgodyn rhagor na 5 pwys yn ôl i'r dŵr, heb ei niweidio: ac y dylid lleihau'r cyfyngiad maint hwn lle bo sewin yn llai, fel arfer.
- I gloi, os gwelwch lygredd neu unrhyw beth arall y teimlwch y gallai niweidio stociau pysgod afonydd neu lynnoedd, galwch rif argyfwng Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd: 0800 807060.



Ffotô: Dave Mee

Gwerth sbort

Mae hwyl garw ar ddal sewin, a genweirwyr gêm Cymru gyfan wrth eu boddau â hwy. Er y bu lleihad yn niferoedd eogiaid, mae gwell llewyrch ar sewin: ac yn sawl man, maent yn fwy gwerthfawr nag eogiaid i enweirwyr a'r economi lleol. Yn ddiweddar, fodd bynnag, mae arwyddion yn awgrymu fod y sewin hwythau o dan bwysau. Gallai eu hamddiffyn heddiw osgoi difetha'r stociau yn y dyfodol.



Ffotô: Macc Morgan

Sut mae rhyddhau sewin yn ddiogel?

Yn bwysicaf oll, defnyddiwch fachau sengl, diadfach gyda blaen lein cyn gryfed ag y bo modd. Chwaraewch y sewin cyn gyflymed ag y gallwch, a rhwydwch ef yn nŵr digon dwfn i osgoi cyffwrdd â gwaelod neu lan yr afon. Trafodwch y pysgodyn cyn lleied ag y bo modd (dyma lle mae bachau diadfach o gymorth mawr), gan ddefnyddio gefail i dynnu'r bachyn: yna rhyddhewch y pysgodyn o'r rhwyd. Os yw'r sewin wedi'i flino'n llwyr gan y chwarae, daliwch ef, yn ofalus, â'i geg yn wynebu'r llif hyd nes y daw ato'i hun ddigon i nofio ymaith. Byddwch yn arbennig o ofalus yn ystod yr haf: bydd y dŵr yn gynhesach, a gall y bydd ar bysgod angen rhagor o amser i ddadflino.



Gwella cynefin

Dyma enghraifft o sut y mae creu lleiniau clustogi'n lleihau effaith da byw, a'r afon o ganlyniad yn dychwelyd i gyflwr mwy naturiol.

Peidiwch ag anghofio rhoi gwybod am eich daliad chi!

Mae ystadegau daliadau'n hanfodol ar gyfer gweld tueddiadau lleol a chenedlaethol poblogaethau sewin. Peidiwch ag anghofio llenwi'r ffurflenni (pysgod a laddwyd neu a ddychwelwyd) ar gefn eich Trwydded Pysgod Mudol Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd chi, a'u gyrru at y cyfeiriad priodol. Dylai hynny gynnwys adegau pan ni ddaliwyd pysgod, gan fod ymdrech bysgota'n rhan bwysig o fethodoleg bresennol Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd ar gyfer asesu'r stoc sewin, oherwydd fe'i seilir ar dueddiadau daliadau pob diwrnod trwydded unigol.

Ar sail yr wybodaeth daliadau ac ymdrech genweiriau ddiweddaraf sydd ar gael, byddai cynyddu dal a rhyddhau o les i bob afon: ond y rhai sydd fwyaf tan bwysau yw:

Cymru:	Tawe, Teifi, Dwyfor, Tywi, Ogwr, Llŵchwr, Ogwen
De-orllewin Lloegr:	Otter, Dart, Fowey, Torridge, Camel
Gogledd-ddwyrain Lloegr:	Ribble, Lune, Esk Cumbria, Derwennydd, Esk y Goror, Idon

Ymchwil

I gloi, mae sawl cynllun sewin ar gerdded, gan gynnwys Cynllun Sewin Celtaidd (www.celticseatrout.com). Efallai y bydd rhai ohonynt yn gofyn i enweirwyr yrru samplau cen. Bydd hynny'n wirfoddol, ond os oes modd i chi ein helpu ni, gwerthfawrogir eich cymorth chi'n fawr.

Rhagor o wybodaeth

Y Gymdeithas Eogiaid a Brithyllod - www.salmon-trout.org

Cymdeithas Genweirio Eogiaid a Brithyllod Cymru - www.wstaa.org

Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd Cymru - www.asiantaeth-amgylchedd.cymru.gov.uk

Y Gymdeithas Ymddiriedolaethau Afon - www.associationofrivertrusts.org.uk

Afonydd Cymru - www.afonyddcymru.org

