



RIVER AYR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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FISHERIES INFORMATION PACK

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CODE OF PRACTICE

The River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board has produced this Code to conserve our fish stocks for now and the future.

1. Mandatory by Law:

- (a) For the River Ayr, the Salmon & Sea Trout Season is from 11 February to 31 October inclusive. The Brown Trout Season is from 15 March to 6 October inclusive.
- (b) The Scottish Government Marine Directorate has designated the River Ayr as Poor (Grade 3) as part of Conservation measures enforced by the *Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations 2016* (as amended). **Therefore all salmon must be returned alive i.e. are subject to Mandatory 100% Catch & Release.**
- (c) In any event, it is a criminal offence:
 - i. to retain a salmon or grilse before 1 April, so they must be returned
 - ii. It is a criminal offence to kill a coloured/gravid salmon.
 - iii. All kelts must be returned.
- (d) All salmon, and grilse caught must be returned and recorded in your catch returns.

2. *Gyrodactylus Salaris* Declaration Forms must be signed by Anglers before fishing.

3. The Board recommends:

- (a) The Board continues to pursue a voluntary agreement with anglers to delay the start of the salmon fishing season until 15th March each year.
- (b) On any spinning lure, only one treble hook should be used.
- (c) The use of barbless or crushed barbed hooks, so Anglers can return fish without unnecessary damage.
- (d) Against worm fishing for salmon. However, where worm fishing takes place, please use circle hooks, so Anglers can return fish without unnecessary damage.
- (e) Against the use of prawn, shrimp, or any organic baits at any time.
- (f) All sea trout and whitling are returned and recorded in your catch returns.

4. Safe landing and handling requirements

Before you set off, make sure you have the following tackle for safe catch and release:

Suitable tackle - Use fishing tackle that is capable of landing salmon quickly to avoid exhausting them before release.

Approved by River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board: 2 April 2025

Barbless hooks – for quick release and minimised risk of bleeding when removing the hooks, always use a barbless hook. A size 8 (or preferably smaller) is recommended.

A **knotless net** – use a wide, soft knotless net to minimise damage by allowing the fish to lie flat as well as reducing damage to its scales.

Tip: to assist with a swift release make sure you have a tool, such as long-nosed forceps, at hand for prompt hook removal. Also, if you plan on recording or taking a photograph of your catch, make sure that you keep all the equipment close to hand so that this can be done quickly.

Landing the fish

It's vital not to lift the fish out of the water; research has shown that salmon which are exposed to air, even for a short period, have a significantly reduced survival rate. Certainly do not lift the salmon by the tail or gill cover, as this can cause internal damage as well as damage to tendons.

Recording your catch

If you want to take a photograph of your catch, keep the fish in the water or at least slightly above it and support the fish gently under its belly. When handling the salmon, always do so with wet hands to avoid damaging (burning) the fish's outer boundary layer of mucus – which protects it against disease and parasites. If you must weigh the fish, then weigh with the fish enclosed in the net or use a weigh net.

A tape measure or wading stick can be marked to record approximate length – this should be done while the fish is kept in the water. This can also be used against a chart to measure approximate weight.

Recovery and unhooking the fish

Gently remove the hook by hand or with forceps when the fish is quiet. If it is deeply embedded, then cut the leader as close as possible to the hook. Generally, fish can be released and survive with the hook still attached and this will cause less damage to the fish than if the embedded hook is removed.

Recovery may take some time, but it is vital for fish to be allowed to recover before they are released into clean, steady water.

Download a helpful Best Practice Guidance from Fisheries Management Scotland:

<https://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Best-Practice-Guidance-Catch-and-Release-January-2025.pdf>

5. Farmed Salmon / Pink (Pacific) Salmon

If you capture a farmed salmon or pink (pacific) salmon, it should be humanely killed and the Board informed on the above contact details. Scale samples (in the case of pink salmon, the whole salmon) should be taken and sent to Ayrshire Rivers Trust.

The capture should also be reported on the Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) Website Reporting tool at:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/1b8632f1d06c48c89bbac8901d084346>

FMS Guidance on identifying farmed salmon can be found at:

<http://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/200908-Aqua-Guidance-for-Anglers.pdf>

Ayrshire Rivers Trust's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwKwPv1yGBM&t=271s>

FMS Guidance on identifying Pink (Pacific) Salmon can be found at:

<http://fms.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/210519-INNS-Statement-Pink-salmon.pdf>

6. **Giant Hogweed / Japanese Knotweed / Himalayan Balsam**

See Ayrshire Rivers Trust leaflet at:

<http://www.doonfishing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ART-Invasive-Weeds-Information-30.06.21.pdf>

7. **Catch Returns**

Ayrshire Rivers Trust has helped the Board in developing a Catch Return App for use by anglers in the River Ayr catchment. This allows you to record your Rod Effort and Catches and upload details of the date, time and location to a central location, which will aid the provision of official Annual Catch Returns to both Scottish Government Marine Inspectorate and the River Ayr DSFB.

Download the App at:

<https://survey123.arcgis.app?itemID=562e8514d0d64a47a55849bd92ae4469>

Or use the camera on your phone to scan the QR Code:



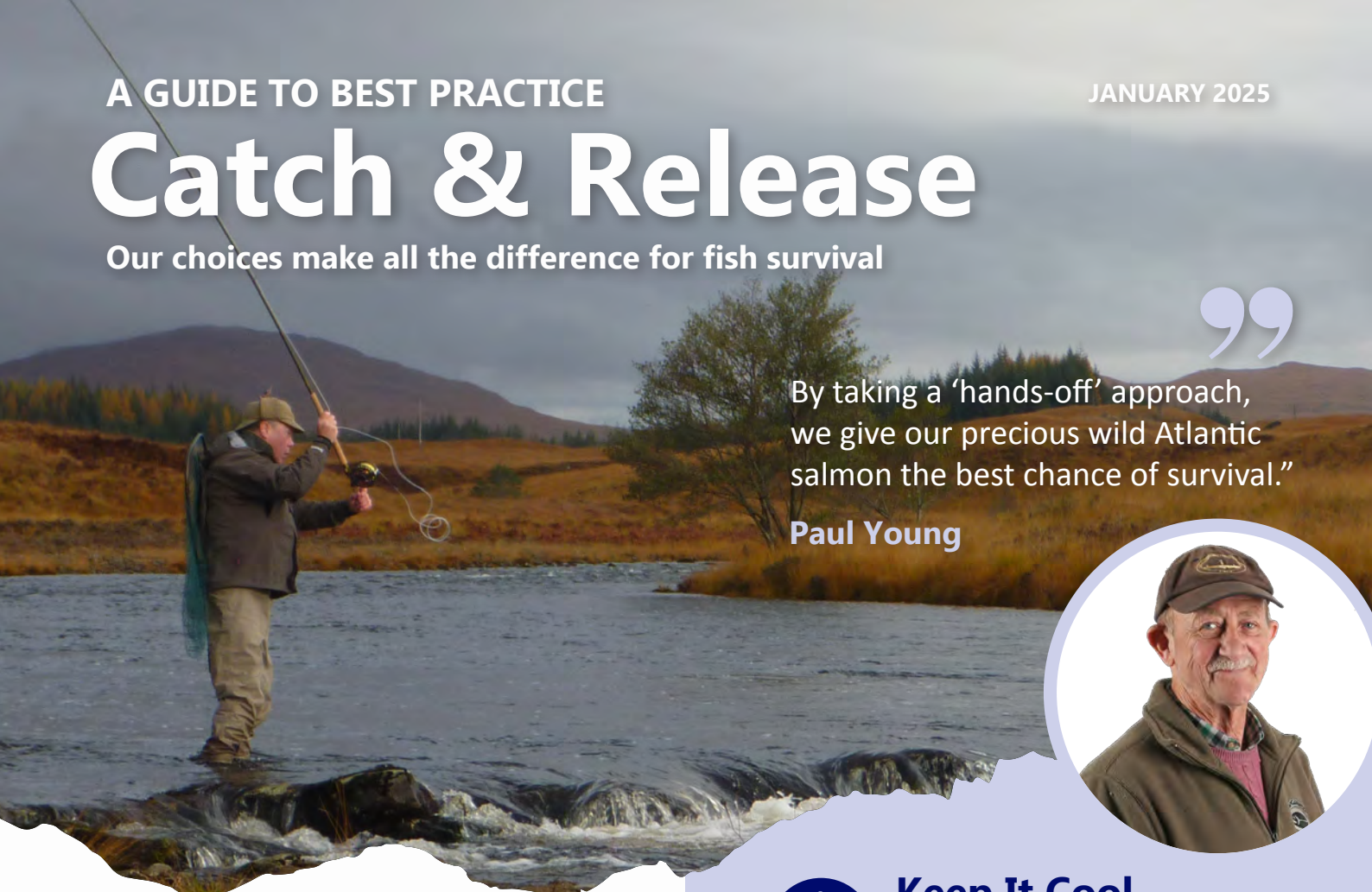
8. **Safety**

Be aware of safety on and around the River. Anglers approach the River at their own risk.

Please spread the word on this Code of Practice. Your Board are investing in the future so that we all can continue to enjoy the sport on the River.

Catch & Release

Our choices make all the difference for fish survival



By taking a ‘hands-off’ approach, we give our precious wild Atlantic salmon the best chance of survival.”

Paul Young



UK anglers are leaders in conservation.

In Scotland, anglers have set an example with an **impressive release rate exceeding 95% for wild Atlantic salmon**. Our salmon and sea trout angling practices stand out as some of the most responsible globally.

This success is not just a win for conservation—it helps rivers to have sustainable populations of wild fish to sustain angling and in turn supports the rural communities that rely on fishing tourism, contributing over **£79 million to Scotland’s economy each year**.

Wild fish face unprecedented threats from climate change, pollution, and habitat disruption, with populations declining steadily over the past three decades. There’s new evidence about the impacts of air exposure and river temperature on fish health and survival.

By adopting small changes to catch and release practices, **we can achieve almost 100% survival rate of our caught fish** and continue to play our part to protect populations for generations to come.

If we all follow catch and release guidance, a 100% survival rate of caught fish can be achieved.



Keep It Cool

Salmon struggle in warmer water; fish on cooler days or early mornings to reduce stress.



Keep Hands Off

Wherever possible, avoid handling fish directly to prevent infection. With the right tools, in most cases it’s easy to unhook without touching the fish.



Keep It Under

Fish have a better chance of survival when they stay submerged throughout the release.



Keep It Clean

Always check, clean, and dry your gear to prevent spreading disease, parasites, and invasive species.

Scan to watch the ‘Contactless’ film



Before you fish Plan Your Pool



"Some mornings, I'll skip fishing if the conditions aren't right. It's about what's best for the fish."

**-Alison Baker,
Angling Scotland**

Assess the conditions

Salmon are more vulnerable when water temperatures rise. When water reaches 18°C or higher, salmon become stressed. Avoid fishing above 20°C. Consider carrying a water thermometer.

Select a Spot

Think ahead about where you might hook a fish, play it and how you will release it. If you select an accessible spot, for example stable banks or areas with low embankments, you may find it easier to land and release fish gently.



After you fish Keep It Clean

How can I avoid accidental spreading?

While you're on the river, you can play a crucial role in safeguarding fish from the threats of **diseases**, **parasites**, and **invasive species**. Once these threats take hold, they become very difficult to eliminate.

CHECK

Check your equipment, boat, and clothing after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.

CLEAN

Clean everything thoroughly as soon as you can, paying attention to areas that are damp or hard to access. Use hot water if possible.

DRY

Dry everything for as long as you can before using elsewhere as some invasive plants and animals can survive for over two weeks in damp conditions.

What should I do if I spot something?

Report any signs of disease, parasites, or invasive species using our app.



Scan the QR Code to learn more.

Tackle Tips for Quick, Safe Release

Check that you have these in your tackle bag before setting out.

Where possible, use Barbless, Single Hooks

Why? Double and treble hooks can cause more injuries to fish. Opt instead for one barbless, single hook which is easier to remove for a quick release, minimising injury.

Best Choice: Use size 8 or smaller.

Pro Tip: If you don't have barbless hooks, flatten barbs with forceps.



Soft, Knotless Nets

Why? Preserves the fish's protective slime layer, scales, fins, and eyes from damage.

Best Choice: A rubber or mesh net with a shallow, wide bottom lets fish lie flat and stay protected.

Pro Tip: It's easy to re-purpose an older style net with a modern, fish friendly mesh.

Strong Leaders or Lines

Why? Shortens the fight, reducing fish stress.

Best Choice: As strong a leader or line as possible to land fish quickly and safely.

Pro Tip: Modern fluorocarbon line means you have greater strength to diameter. Consider using this material to achieve stronger breaking strain without sacrificing presentation.



Long-Nosed Forceps and Line Cutter

Why? Having these tools ready at hand ensures quick, safe unhooking.

Best Choice: A scissor clamp is an all-in-one solution for anglers, combining the functions of long-nosed forceps and line cutting scissors.

Pro Tip: Try using a mobile phone neck lanyard to quickly snap a picture while the fish is still in the net.

Avoid Felt Soles

Why? Felt soles are difficult to clean and dry, making them a high-risk factor for spreading invasive species and pathogens between rivers.

Best Choice: Rubber or interchangeable soles are easier to dry and disinfect.

Pro Tip: Fish multiple locations? Ensure your wading boots are cleaned and sanitised to achieve good biosecurity between different rivers.



Water Thermometer

Why? Monitoring water temperature helps you decide when it's safe to fish, as higher temperatures can stress fish and reduce survival after release.

Best Choice: A pocket-sized digital thermometer is easy to carry and gives quick, accurate readings.

Pro Tip: Check the water temperature regularly—if it's above 18°C (64°F), consider stopping fishing to protect fish welfare.



Air Exposure

Why does it matter?

When we expose fish to air, even for just a few seconds, we risk their survival.

Though they may swim away, new evidence has shown that these unseen challenges can impact their ability to thrive and breed. Following best practices ensures wild salmon and sea trout have the best possible chance of survival.

"I always think about it from the fish's perspective. Imagine running a mile, then trying to hold your breath. That's similar to what a fish goes through when it's taken out of the water."

- TweedStart Ambassador

Perform a hands-off release from the shore

Step 1: Play the fish quickly

Step 2: Unhook the fish in the water without handling or keep fish submerged in a rubber mesh net if possible

Step 3: Use tools like forceps to unhook, ideally without touching the fish.

Step 4: Release and watch the fish swim away safely!

The best releases are quick and hands-off, thanks to simple planning and preparation.

Perform a hands-off release from a boat

Step 1: Go to the shore to land the fish.

Step 2: Wear waders in the boat so the fish can be netted outside the boat in the shallows. This is especially the case in low water conditions

Step 3: Unhook the fish in the water with a minimum of handling.

Step 4: If pictures are being taken, keep the fish in the water.

Step 5: Release and watch the fish swim away safely!

Not only are these best practice guidelines for fish welfare but releasing a fish at the side of the river in shallow water also gives the best possible client experience.



What do I do if a fish is hooked deeply?

Sacrifice the fly, not the fish.

If the fish is hooked deep in the throat or gut, research shows that it is best to cut the leader at the hook and leave the hook in the fish. Fish are capable of rejecting or expelling hooks on their own! Prolonged attempts to remove the hook often do more harm than good.

What do I do if a fish is belly up?

Hold the fish gently underwater, facing upstream until it regains strength.

DO NOT lift the fish, especially by the tail

NEVER drag the fish over stones, gravel, or onto the bank.



Recording Your Catch

Photography Tips

Taking photos can be a memorable part of the experience, but fish are best left in the water. If alone, take a photo of the submerged fish whilst holding the line, or in the net. With a companion, have them ready to snap a photo before you unhook.

Avoid Weighing

Measuring length is a safer way to record your catch and this can be used to provide a weight estimate. Use a tape measure or your rod's handle and refer to the weight estimation chart provided. This minimises handling and supports fish recovery. Several length-to-weight conversion guides exist, and length-to-weight can vary, depending on the condition and shape of the fish. Below is a sample guide.

Length (inches)	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Weight (lbs)	6	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	13	14	15.5	17	18.5	20	22	23.5	25.5
Length (inches)	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
Weight (lbs)	27.5	29.5	32	34	36.5	39	42	44.5	47.5	50.5	53.5	57	60	64	68	72



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This leaflet has been compiled with advice and guidance from the following organisations and individuals:



Special thanks to: Steven Mackenzie, Anne Woodcock (Tweed Foundation), Bob White, Paul Young & Craig Somerville.

Scan to watch the 'Contactless' film



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Gyrodactylus salaris Declaration

Gyrodactylus salaris is an extremely dangerous parasite and we are taking the most careful steps to make sure it does not enter the River Ayr Fishery. As such, we are adopting rigorous biosecurity procedures, which we are sure you will support.

What are the risks?

Gyrodactylus salaris has been shown to survive away from a live fish host for five-seven days at ambient river temperatures and for 78 hours and 42 hours at salinities of 10 ppt (parts per thousand) and 20 ppt, respectively. Risk is associated with movement of materials (animate and inanimate) that can carry low salinity water, which have recently been in contact with infected fish, and which have been kept in cool conditions sufficient to permit the temporary survival of the parasite away from live fish. Equipment or product that has been kept cool and damp and is transferred rapidly (within one week) may present high levels of risk.

This notorious parasite has destroyed the Salmon stocks of over 20 rivers in NORWAY. It was introduced to the Atlantic coast of Norway on Baltic Sea salmon taken to fish farms there. Baltic Salmon are immune to it, Atlantic Salmon are not – and tests have shown that Scottish Atlantic Salmon are destroyed by it just as easily as Norwegian.

It is also indigenous to, or has been spread to RUSSIA, FINLAND, SWEDEN, GERMANY, FRANCE, SPAIN and PORTUGAL, largely through fish-farm movements of Rainbow Trout.

It is a minute, external parasite, less than half a millimetre long and can live off fish for a considerable time making it (as yet) impossible to eradicate from any river. Desperate methods being used in Norway involve poisoning all the fish in a river and leaving it fallow for several months at least to try and break the cycle. No successes have yet been reported.

If this parasite gets into the River Ayr it means the absolute end of our Salmon.

As part of this biosecurity we require you to sign ONE of the declarations overleaf BEFORE you start fishing:

DECLARATION BY ANGLER

A: I declare that none of my fishing equipment has been outside the United Kingdom in the 7 days prior to the commencement of my fishing at (*insert beat name*) on (*insert date*).

Signed: Print Name:

Fishing Tenant

B: I declare that my fishing equipment has been used outside the United Kingdom in the 7 days prior to the commencement of my fishing at (*insert beat name*) on (*insert date*) and that it has been properly sterilised adopting one of the following methods (*please tick one of the following*):

	Please tick
Method A: Drying to a minimum of 20° C for at least 2 days	
Method B: Heating to above 60°C for at least one hour	
Method C: Deep freezing for at least one day	
Method D: Immersion of materials in a solution of, or addition of one of the following chemicals to water to the concentration indicated for a minimum of 10 minutes	
Y Virkon 1%	
Y Wescodyne 1%	
Y Sodium chloride (common salt) 3%	
Y Sodium hydroxide 0.2%	

NB The chemicals above may be available from agricultural chemical suppliers; the use of trade names is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply endorsement of any particular product; users should check that their use does not damage their equipment.

Signed: Print Name:

C: I declare that my fishing equipment has been used outside the United Kingdom in the 7 days prior to the commencement of my fishing at (*insert beat name*) on (*insert date*) and that it has NOT been sterilised. I agree that it will be sterilised by the fishery proprietors before I commence fishing and I understand that this may result in a delay to the start of my fishing.

Signed: Print Name:

WANTED

Information on Pink salmon, red skin disease and escaped farmed salmon

Pink salmon Pink salmon are an invasive, non-native species of pacific salmon and are increasing being caught and observed in Scottish rivers. These fish were originally introduced to some Russian rivers in the 1960s, have slowly spread westwards and have now colonised some northern Norwegian rivers. Due to their different lifecycle, they tend to arrive in odd-numbered years, and have been recorded in higher numbers in 2017 and 2019.



Red skin disease In recent years, there have been increasing reports of wild Atlantic salmon showing red skin issues, including lesions, red marks on vent and ulceration. This is commonly referred to as red skin disease. Efforts are being made to better understand what is causing this condition. If you capture or observe any wild Atlantic salmon showing symptoms, please let us know.



Escaped farmed fish are shown to have negative impacts on wild salmon populations through genetic impacts arising from interbreeding. Hybridization between wild and escaped farmed salmon can reduce wild salmon production and survival, in addition to direct ecological interactions such as competition for food and habitat. If you capture a farmed salmon, it should be humanely killed. If possible, a sample of scales should be taken, which will allow us to confirm that the fish is of farmed origin.



Please report any information on the above issues through our app by scanning the QR code opposite OR by accessing the link at <http://fms.scot/we-need-your-help-information-wanted-on-salmon/>



When farmed fish first enter wild systems, there can be several identifying features. However, once farmed fish have been in the wild for a while it can be harder to distinguish from wild fish (see below). Often a ragged or wavy dorsal fin is the most noticeable feature of a farmed fish but the images below show a range of identifying features.



'Wavy' dorsal fin.
Credit: Ness DSFB



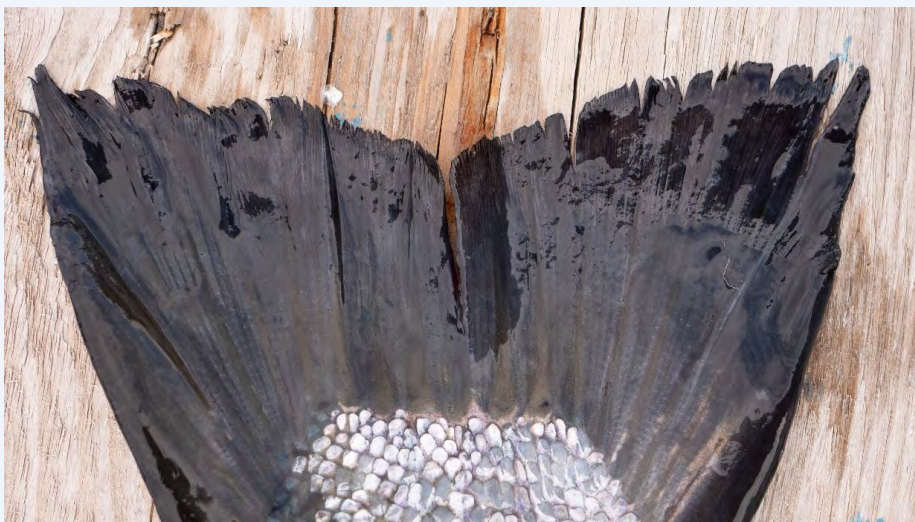
'Ragged' dorsal fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides
Fisheries Trust



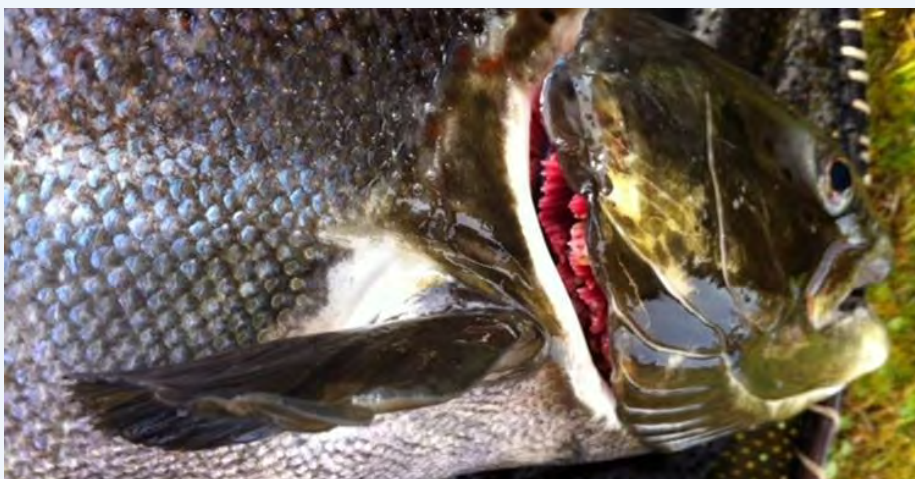
Damaged pectoral fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides
Fisheries Trust



Farmed fish pectoral fin showing that damage may be minimal.
Credit: Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust



Farmed fish tail fin.
Credit: Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust



Shortened gill covers. Credit: Ness DSFB

Less obvious indicators include more spots than a wild fish (especially below the lateral line). Once these fish have been in the wild for a while, the distinction of these features may diminish, and it could become harder to identify conclusively. Escapees at sea for some time will re-grow their fins perfectly but by running your finger along the leading edge of a farmed salmon's pectoral fin it will feel bumpy in comparison to a wild's smooth one. Anglers should remain vigilant with their catches and seek second opinions where doubt occurs.



Fisheries Management Scotland are collecting information related to catches of farmed fish and details can be found on our Website (www.fms.scot) or scan the QR code for direct form access.



Pacific Pink Salmon: **Advice note – May 2021**



Introduction

The purpose of this advice note is to ensure:

- That all stakeholders, including fishery managers and anglers, are alert to the possibility of the return of Pink salmon in Scottish waters during 2021
- to clarify the legal situation regarding capture and retention of these fish in Scotland
- to ensure anglers, fishery managers and others know what to do should pink salmon be observed or captured in Scotland

Background

In 2017, unprecedented numbers of Pink salmon were captured across the UK. Captures were also reported in Norway, Finland, Iceland, Denmark and Germany. 2019 saw further captures, but much less than that recorded in 2017. Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) are not native to Scotland and are likely to have 'strayed' from some of the rivers in northern Norway or Russia. These fish were originally introduced to some Russian rivers in the 1960s, have slowly spread westwards and have now colonised some northern Norwegian rivers. These fish spawn at a different time from Atlantic salmon, have a two-year lifecycle and generally spawn in summer (and often in main river channels in the lower reaches of rivers, and sometimes in upstream tributaries).

Due to their two-year lifecycle, juvenile fish will be derived from distinct 'odd' or 'even' years, with the Russian/Norwegian fish being odd-year stocks. It is therefore possible that they will occur again in Scottish rivers in 2021. The reasons behind the unusually large numbers in 2017 remain unclear. We know that the population from the Russian Kola Peninsula tends to be stronger and more numerous in odd years rather than even years. It would appear that the 2017 salmon originated from a particularly strong year class with good marine survival and this may explain the unusually high numbers across several countries in 2017.

Information gleaned from the 2017 and 2019 events

Previous advice had suggested that the environmental conditions in Scotland are not favourable for colonisation. During 2017, important information was gathered about the interactions of these fish in Scottish rivers. Pink salmon were observed creating redds and spawning, and the opportunity was taken to closely monitor the activities of these fish and consider what management action might be effective to reduce potential impacts on native fish. Egg experiments concluded that the eggs removed from redd sites and observed under laboratory conditions were viable – these eggs hatched into alevins. As such, we need to remain alert to the possibility that a viable population could become established if conditions are suitable.

The 2021 situation

Fisheries Management Scotland, Scottish Government, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) are co-ordinating a number of actions and sharing advice to ensure that any recurrence of Pink salmon in Scotland can be managed appropriately. This will include ongoing advice to stakeholders, publicity/awareness raising and liaison with UK and international fishery managers to exchange information on any new situation. For 2021, there have been no recorded incidences of Pink salmon in the UK, however these fish did not previously begin to appear in catches until June/July in the UK.

The law

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Pink salmon of the species *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha* are an invasive non-native species. The 1981 Act makes it an offence to fish for and retain Pink salmon (i.e. have

one in your possession or under your control). However, if a pink salmon is caught accidentally whilst fishing for other species, although it is technically an offence, a defence of due diligence may be established if it can be shown that best practice was followed. Please see our advice below as to what should be done if a Pink salmon is captured.

Scottish Government and agencies are investigating how the current legislation might be improved to ensure that there is a more specific approach to managing Pink salmon in Scotland. Options may include changes to ensure fisheries enforcement can be improved and to put in place a more formal framework for reporting captures and monitoring impacts of this species on native populations of fish. There is also the option of issuing licences to district salmon fishery board and/or fisheries trusts, which could allow legal, managed and targeted effort to capture these fish. We will provide further advice on this shortly.

Advice for anglers & other stakeholders - what should you do if you see or capture a Pacific salmon?

Pacific pink salmon are usually clearly identifiable from their Atlantic salmon counterparts – particularly when mature and in spawning condition – see Annex 1. All captures should be reported to the relevant [district salmon fishery board](#) and [fishery trust](#) and this information will be collated by Fisheries Management Scotland and Marine Scotland Science and shared with all relevant Agencies.

If you are confident that you have captured a pacific pink salmon the fish should be humanely despatched and retained. If you have killed and retained a pink salmon, please immediately contact the relevant district salmon fishery board, who will arrange for further inspection and analysis, if necessary. A simple [reporting app](#) has been developed to record key information on fish observed or caught, including the ability to upload images and record the location. Pink salmon which have been observed, and not caught, and also any dead fish should also be recorded on the app.

Please be vigilant for any early or unusual spawning activity – particularly during August and September, when any pink salmon present are likely to be active in spawning areas – shallow, gravelly glides and runs. Any suspected activity should be reported as above.

Advice for DSFBs and Trusts

Scale samples from fish captured should be taken and, where it is possible to do so, such fish should be frozen and stored whole as soon as possible after capture. This advice also relates to dead fish found in Scottish rivers.

If you are unable to retain whole specimens, it would be useful as an alternative to ensure that scales and fin clips (adipose or a clip from any other fins) are collected, as well as a sample of dorsal muscle tissue (at least 2cm x 2cm). A note of fork length measurement and weight of fish would also be worth recording.

Kept together in a small freezer bag with a note of capture date and location, sex and method of capture, these can be stored in a standard domestic freezer before collection. If possible, please ensure that at least three fish from each river or stream catchment are collected where these are available.

For further information please contact:

Brian Davidson | Director of Communications & Administration
Tel: 0131 221 6567 | Email: brian@fms.scot

Dr Alan Wells | Chief Executive
Tel: 0131 221 6567 | Email: alan@fms.scot

Annex 1: Identification of Pink Salmon

Pacific pink salmon, when fresh from the sea, are steel blue to blue-green on their backs, silver on the flanks and white on their bellies. There are large black spots on the backs, upper flanks, adipose fins and tail – some of the spots on the tail can be as large as the fish's eyes. They are very uniform in size, reaching only 40 to 60cms in length. It is possible that at first sight, a fresh pink salmon may be confused with a small Atlantic salmon.



Pink salmon

Note shape of tail, spots on tail and dark mouth. *Images courtesy of Helmsdale DSFB & River Dee Trust*



Breeding males are immediately identifiable because of their humps and they will almost certainly be running milt at this time of year. Their black tongues and heavily spotted tails are also very obvious. Females will show heavily spotted tails and be pinkish-brown on the flanks.



Male Pink salmon in breeding colouration – note the shape of body and heavily spotted tail *Image courtesy of Nigel Fell*

INVASIVE WEEDS

- Giant Hogweed



- Toxic sap reacts with sunlight causing photosensitive dermatitis.
- Causes blistering to skin that can recur year after year.
- Can cause blindness if sap gets in the eyes.
- Skin contact with stem or leaves should be avoided.
- Skin can be left permanently discoloured and sensitised.



- Tall growing – up to 15 feet!
- Hollow stems
- Large umbrella like flowers.
- More than 50,000 seeds per plant.
- Quickly forms monoculture.
- Easily controlled by spraying.

It is essential that all flowering plants are controlled to prevent rapid increase of seed bank and years of further effort to eradicate this nuisance species. Contact Ayrshire rivers Trust for assistance and advice 01290 518130

- Japanese Knotweed



- Highly invasive, takes over and excludes all other plants.
- Spreads only by cuttings from root or shoot.
- Does not produce seed in UK.
- Difficult and expensive to control. Spraying is ineffective. Control is best achieved by stem injection with a measured dose of glyphosate weedkiller.
- Reduces land values especially where development is planned.
- Planning regulations require removal pre development.
- Strict control on disposal of waste plant material and contaminated soil.
- For specialist advice contact Ayrshire Rivers Trust 01290 518130

- Himalayan Balsam



- Highly invasive annual that forms large areas of monoculture.
- Leads to bare soils in winter & increased erosion. Contributes to diffuse pollution.
- Seed pods pop on contact in late summer spreading the seed for up to 7metres.
- Pale pink to deep purple flowers that resemble an upturned policeman's helmet.
- Highly attractive to bees leading to reduced pollination in native species.
- Controlled by manual pulling or spraying where dense.
- Best controlled late June and July

Contact Ayrshire Rivers Trust for advice 01290 518130.





RIVER AYR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

Clerk to the Board: Iain K Clark, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP
c/o Gilson Gray LLP, 160 West George Street, Glasgow G2 2HQ
Direct: +44 (0)141 530 2025 **Mobile:** +44 (0)7908 022 304
Email: RiverAyrDSFB@gilsongray.co.uk
Website: www.ayrfishing.co.uk

FISHERY ASSESSMENTS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

For those of you unfamiliar with the Work of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board and how Fishery Assessments operate, here are some Answers to Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the Role of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board (“River Ayr DSFB”)?

The River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board is a statutory body empowered under Part 3 of the *Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003* (“**the 2003 Act**”), which has subsequently been amended by the *Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Acts 2007 and 2013*, to manage the protection, enhancement and conservation of the Atlantic salmon and sea trout stocks in the River Ayr. It also has a duty to ensure the general protection and improvement of the fisheries within their district.

What are the Aims of the River Ayr DSFB?

- Protecting and improving the fisheries within its district
- Increasing salmon
- Running a restocking programme in selected areas where low numbers of parr and salmon are identified.
- Encouraging responsible angling

The River Ayr DSFB works to raise the profile of the economic, cultural and environmental importance of the River Ayr to the local area, both among residents and visiting anglers.

The Board also represents the interests of the River Ayr at regional and national forums.

What are Fishery Assessments?

District Salmon Fishery Boards (“**DSFBs**”) are funded through the Fishery Assessment, which is a form of non-domestic rate. The Local Authority District Assessor values the Salmon and Sea Trout fisheries within that district every three years. The valuation is largely based on the catches of Salmon and Sea Trout within each fishery. The DSFB then sets a rate in the pound which is applied at a uniform rate to all fisheries in the district.

What does the money from Fishery Assessments fund?

The income generated from Fishery Assessments allows the River Ayr DSFB to fulfil its statutory role. The Board undertakes work on the river to protect and improve the fisheries within the catchment. It will do so taking account of the priorities set within the Board’s Fishery Management Plan, which will allow the Board’s efforts and limited resources to be channeled towards making improvements where they are most needed and achievable.

What type of Project Work does the River Ayr DSB carry out?

Projects which may be considered and implemented, working with the Board's Scientific Advisers and partners, Ayrshire Rivers Trust, include:

- Fencing projects to protect burns where the habitat has been affected by silt arising from livestock driven erosion, to offer spawning potential for both trout and salmon.
- Planting trees within fenced areas to help cool and shade fish habitat, particularly important as average temperatures rise through global warming.
- Dealing with invasive weeds, which can not only be dangerous to humans (e.g. Giant Hogweed), but which can cause significant issues for landowners (e.g. Japanese Knotweed), and cause erosion (e.g. Himalayan Balsam)
- Addressing issues of piscivorous birds and other predators
- Electrofishing and monitoring of impacts
- Collating and reporting on Annual Catch Returns
- Pollution Control
- Making responses to Statutory Consultations
- And many other areas of work

Why have I received this Fishery Assessment Notice?

The River Ayr DSFB has the power to issue Fishery Assessments on each Salmon Fishery within its District under *section 44 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 Act* as noted on the Valuation Roll maintained by Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board ("AVJB").

Who is the person responsible for Payment of Fishery Assessments?

The ultimate responsibility for payment of Fishery Assessments lies with the Qualified Proprietors (sometimes call 'Riparian Owners') of Salmon Fishing Rights. However, depending on the circumstances, frequently the Fishery Assessment Notices are issued direct to their tenants e.g. clubs, associations, fishing syndicates, or sometimes individuals, for payment on behalf of the Qualified Proprietor.

On what basis are Salmon Fisheries valued?

The Valuation Roll of fishing rights is updated every three years by the District Assessor of AVJB carrying out a revaluation of the Rateable Values of each Salmon Fishery (often called a 'beat') in the District. Each salmon 'fishings' or 'beat' has a unique name and reference.

Re-Valuation, Making Proposals/Appeal

The latest re-valuation exercise was carried out with effect from 1 April 2023. The previous re-valuation was in effect from 1 April 2017 and updated on 1 April 2020. The next re-valuation exercise is due to be carried out in 2026.

The Assessor at AVJB issued a Revaluation Notice to the Proprietor, Tenant and Occupier named in the Valuation Roll showing the Rateable Value with effect from 1 April 2023.

If a Proprietor believes that the Rateable Value is incorrect, they can make a Proposal to AVJB to alter it (previously called an Appeal). The deadline for making a proposal against a Revaluation Notice for 1 April 2023 was 31 July 2023. The River Ayr DSFB is not involved in any such Proposal/Appeal Process, which is administered by AVJB.

What do I do if the records are incorrect or need to be updated?

If any of the Proprietor, Tenant or Occupier names shown on the Revaluation Notice are incorrect (or for any change of Proprietorship or Tenancy), you should inform AVJB and the Clerk to the River Ayr DSFB, notifying full contact details, i.e. name, postal address, email and telephone contact numbers, date of change of ownership or tenancy.

The Annual Process of Fishery Assessments

Each year, the River Ayr DSFB fixes the uniform rate (called the '**Fishery Assessment Rate**') which is to be uniformly applied to all the Rateable Valuations of each fishery entered in the Valuation Roll maintained by AVJB.

The Clerk to the Board then issues the Fishery Assessment Notices to Qualified Proprietors (or their tenants, as appropriate) for payment for each of the beats of the river.

How does the River Ayr DSFB determine the Fishery Assessment Rate?

The Board takes account of historic Fishery Assessment Rates and the requirement to secure sufficient funds from Fishery Assessments to cover necessary expenditure to meet the Board's statutory obligations for the purpose of the protection or improvement of the fisheries within the River Ayr Catchment Area; and monies to help fund projects on the river, whilst also providing for some degree of contingency.

Why has the Fishery Assessment Rate gone up?

Historically, the Board was aware that COVID-19 caused problems for everyone, including the fishing community. As a consequence of lockdown, falling catch numbers, lack of fishing effort and the fact that some clubs had been struggling, the Board has kept the Fishery Assessment Rates as low as it can, whilst noting the requirement to generate income in order to carry out its statutory functions.

The Board also considered that, after review of the new Valuation Roll from Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board ("**AVJB**") following revaluation with effect from 1 April 2023, there was a reduction of £22,395 (i.e. 43%) in the Rateable Values of the River to £29,520.

Therefore, taking account of all of the above, at its meeting on 11 June 2024, the Board fixed the Fishery Assessment Rate for the Year 2024/2025 at 85 pence per £.

Do I have to pay a Fishery Assessment, even if the beat is not fished?

Yes, the Fishery Assessment is based on the Rateable Value x Fishery Assessment Rate and is due to be paid, even if there is no fishing in the beat.

Do I have to pay a Fishery Assessment, even if no Salmon are caught during the year?

Yes, the Fishery Assessment is due to be paid, even if no Salmon are caught in the beat. The Revaluation of Rateable Values of each beat by AVJB takes account of a number of factors, including historic catch returns and information provided by the Qualified Proprietors during the Revaluation process.

How can I pay for my Fishery Assessment(s)?

Payment can be made by one of three methods:

- (1) Payment by LEGL Secure Payment System
- (2) Payment by Direct Bank Transfer
- (3) Payment by Cheque

Payment by Debit or Credit Card through LEGL Secure Payment System

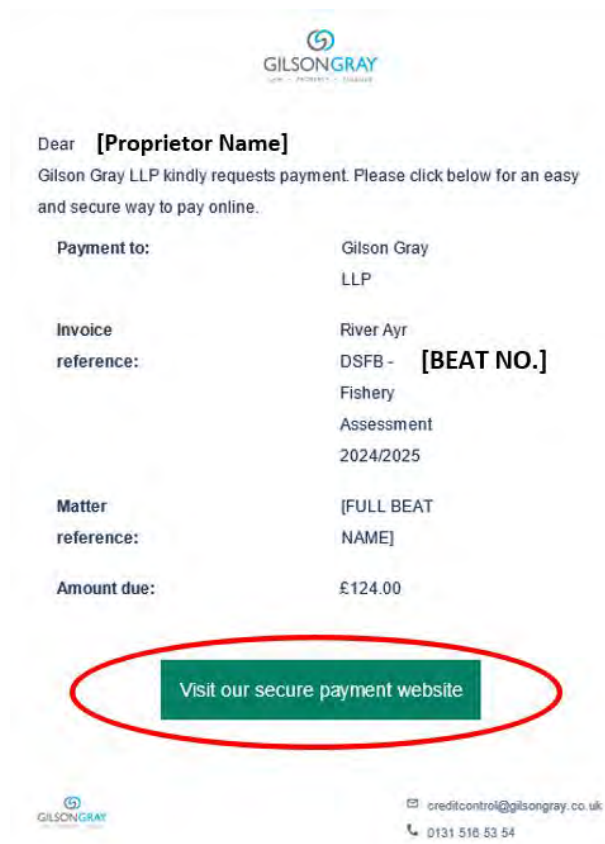
For Season 2024/2025, we are trialling a new method of issuing Fishery Assessment Notices via the LEGL secure payment platform to allow payers (depending on the circumstances for each beat, either the Qualified Proprietor or Tenant) for whom we have an email address to pay by Debit or Credit Card. The whole process is quick, easy and secure:

1. Click the button in the email to “*Visit our Secure Payment Website*”
2. Click “*View Invoice*” to view and download the Fishery Assessment Notice
3. Fill in your Card Details and click the “*Pay*” button to make the Payment

It would help us considerably in the administration of the Fishery Assessments going forwards, if you would please provide us with your email address and contact details.

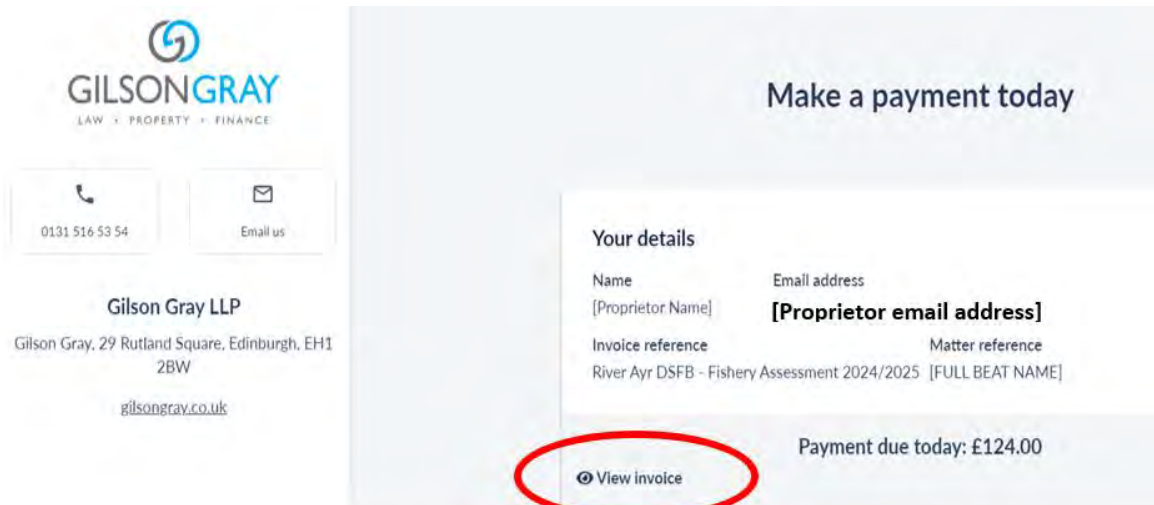
How does the process work?

1. You will receive an email from “**Gilson Gray LLP via Legl**” noreply@legl.com like this:



2. Click the button in the email “*Visit our Secure Payment Website*” (**circled in red** above)

- You will be taken to a Payment Screen, which looks like this:



- To view your Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice) Click “View Invoice” (again, circled in red above).
- The Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice) will look something like this:



6. You can also download and save the Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice) for your records.
7. Once you have downloaded your Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice), you will see you have your own individual reference for your beat. When making payment through LEGL, the amount to be paid and your Beat Reference will be automatically applied.

The image shows a 'Pay by card' form with the following fields:

- Card number:** 1234 5678 9012 3456
- Expiry date:** 01/17 - 12/18
- Security code:** 12345
- Name on card:** (empty)
- Billing address:**
 - Country:** Select country
 - Street:** (empty)
 - House number:** (empty)
 - Postal code:** (empty)
 - City:** (empty)

A green button with a lock icon and the text 'Pay £128.00' is circled in red at the bottom right of the form.

8. Simply fill in your Card Details, Name on Card, and Billing Address, noted above and click the "Pay" button (again **circled in red** above) to make the Payment.
9. Once this payment has been completed, you will automatically receive a confirmation of payment sent via email for your records.

Payment by Direct Bank Transfer

1. You can also make a direct bank transfer through your bank's online banking platform or mobile app.
2. You can download the Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice) as noted in steps 4 and 5 of the instructions for LEGL above.
3. You will need to input the bank details provided on the Fishery Assessment Notice, namely:

Account name: Gilson Gray LLP
Sort Code: 40-20-54
Account number: 73000419
IBAN: GB21HBUK40205473000419
BIC: HBUKGB4B

4. You will need to manually input the amount due, which will be shown on the Fishery Assessment Notice(s) as "**Total Amount Payable**".
5. If you are paying multiple Fishery Assessments for multiple beats, you will need to manually calculate the total due, if you are not using LEGL to make payment.
6. You MUST include the Fishing Beat Reference(s), which will be shown in the Fishery Assessment Notice(s) as:

IMPORTANT: PLEASE QUOTE THE FOLLOWING REF: IKC/RIV/4/1-[Beat No]

7. Make sure to double-check all the information, before confirming the transfer to ensure the transaction goes smoothly.
8. When we are notified of receipt of the funds into the Bank, we will arrange to prepare a Receipted copy of the Fishery Assessment Notice(s) and send that to you. If you have provided an email address to us, we will email that Receipted copy to you. Alternatively, we will send the copy in hard copy by post.
9. You will appreciate that we prefer conducting as much of the Board's business electronically, as it is more time and cost efficient.

Payment by Cheque

1. Alternatively, any cheques should be made payable to “**Gilson Gray LLP**”, who act on behalf of the Board, and sent to:

**Iain K Clark
Clerk to the Board
River Ayr District
Salmon Fishery Board
c/o Gilson Gray LLP
160 West George Street
GLASGOW G2 2HQ**

2. You can download the Fishery Assessment Notice (Invoice) as noted in steps 4 and 5 of the instructions for LEGL above.
3. If you are paying multiple Fishery Assessments for multiple beats, you will need to manually calculate the total due, if you are not using LEGL to make payment.
4. PLEASE write the Fishing Beat Reference(s) on the back of the cheque, which will be shown in the Fishery Assessment Notice(s) as:

IMPORTANT: PLEASE QUOTE THE FOLLOWING REF: IKC/RIV/4/1-[Beat No]

5. Please make sure to double-check all the information and that you have signed and dated your cheque(s), before sending to the address noted above.
6. When we have banked the cheque(s) and we are notified of receipt of the cleared funds into the Bank, we will arrange to prepare a Receipted copy of the Fishery Assessment Notice and send that to you. If you have provided an email address to us, we will email that Receipted copy to you. Alternatively, we will send the copy in hard copy by post.

Keeping the Board's Records up to date

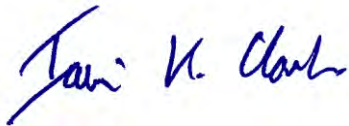
We prefer conducting as much of the Board's business electronically as possible, as it is more time and cost efficient.

We would request cooperation and assistance from all Qualified Proprietors, Tenants, Syndicates, Clubs and Associations to maintain accurate records; and to notify the River Ayr DSFB and AVJB timeously of any change of ownership or tenancy, together with the date of transfer and any payment arrangements e.g. to apportion payment of Fishery Assessments.

If you have not already done so, please email us with your email address and telephone contact numbers, which will aid efficient communication (and help keep costs down) for the Board.

Thank you for your assistance in the Board's endeavours.

Yours sincerely



Iain K Clark

Clerk to the Board

Direct: +44 (0)141 530 2025

Mobile: +44 (0)7908 022 304

Email: RiverAyrDSFB@gilsongray.co.uk