



# DEFA

Rheynn Chymmyltaght, Bee as Eirynys  
The Department of Environment, Food  
And Agriculture

## THE ISLE OF MAN

# Angling Stewardship Measures for Atlantic Salmon

*Notes of Atlantic Salmon – Braddan Atlantagh – Management  
by the Department for Environment, Food and Agriculture*



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## CONTENTS

<b>MINISTERIAL FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WHY YOUR VIEWS MATTER?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RESPONDING TO THIS CONSULTATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BENEFITS OF ANGLING RESTRICTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CURRENT STATUS OF ISLE OF MAN ATLANTIC SALMON</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>8</b>

## **Ministerial Foreword**

Having carefully considered the advice of the Recreational Fisheries Management Board regarding the increasing pressures on our native Atlantic salmon, I have taken the decision to introduce voluntary conservation measures ahead of the forthcoming season. These measures are intended to provide short-term protection for this iconic species while the Department continues to evaluate options for potential regulations.

As a keen angler myself, I fully appreciate both the cultural importance of salmon fishing and the very real challenges facing our fish stocks. This makes it all the more important that we act responsibly and decisively. I therefore welcome the opportunity to take positive steps that support the long-term sustainability of our salmon populations.

Your views will play a vital role in shaping the future management of this species. I encourage all stakeholders to engage constructively as we work together to safeguard the health of our rivers and the resilience of our native salmon for generations to come.

Hon Clare Barber MHK,

Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture.

## Overview

This consultation is seeking views on whether proposed angling restrictions for Atlantic salmon may support their conservation and provide feedback on the development of a Long-Term Management Plan ('LTMP').

Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) – Braddan Atlantagh – are now classified as near threatened after a 23% global population decline between 2006 and 2020, a trend echoed by international bodies and consistent with Isle of Man monitoring, which shows continued local declines driven by multiple pressures, including human exploitation. Recent findings from the [IOM Juvenile Salmonid Monitoring Programme Report 2025 \(opens in a new tab\)](#) indicate that without stronger conservation measures, such as tighter licence restrictions, stocks are likely to fall further.

Anglers, the Recreational Fisheries Management Board ('RFMB'), and conservation groups have all called for more proactive action from the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture ('the Department') as the Department has a duty under the Fisheries Act 2012 ('FA 2012') under section 5, to have regard to conserve freshwater flora and fauna and the freshwater environment. Research conducted by the RFMB recommends strengthening licence conditions, including adopting 'catch and release' only and restricting tackle to barbless hooks to help protect remaining stocks, which is supported by the Department.

The consultation provides an opportunity for anglers, stakeholders to share their perspectives, experiences and suggestions. The feedback collected will help shape potential measures towards the conservation of Atlantic salmon. All responses will be carefully considered and a report summarising the findings will be submitted to the minister and Department executive leadership.

## Why Your Views Matter?

This consultation aims to gather information and opinions on the contribution that proposed angler conservation measures including catch-and-release of Atlantic salmon and the use of barbless hooks only, may have towards salmon conservation. These measures are to be introduced voluntarily for the 2026/27 season, with potential regulation planned for 2027/28. Feedback is sought on the development of a Long Term Management Plan to better align the current management of Isle of Man Atlantic salmon populations, with declines seen locally and internationally, associated with wide ranging causes, many of which are unknown.

Consultations allow the public to contribute directly to Government proposals, ensuring open, two-way communication that strengthens policy development. Feedback may be gathered through written submissions, meetings, surveys or online forums, and is analysed to help shape, refine or finalise policies and legislation. While consultations cannot address individual cases, they play an essential role in guiding Government decisions. In managing freshwater ecosystems, the Department is committed to working collaboratively with Isle of Man residents and stakeholders to support informed, sustainable and cohesive approaches to inland fisheries management.

## Public consultation on LTMP development

Public consultation now plays a vital role in determining the future direction of Atlantic salmon management on the Isle of Man. As custodians of a shared natural resource, the views of anglers, conservation groups, landowners, and the wider public are essential in developing a balanced, evidence-based approach. By contributing to this consultation, the community can help shape a sustainable long-term strategy that protects Atlantic salmon, supports recreational angling, and upholds the values of our UNESCO Biosphere for generations to come.

## Reasonable Adjustments and Alternative Formats

The Department is committed to equal opportunities, and our aim is to make our documents easy to use and accessible to all.

We will take steps to accommodate any reasonable adjustments and provide such assistance as you may reasonably require enabling you to access or reply to this consultation.

If you would like to receive this document in another format or need assistance with accessing or replying to this consultation, please email [john.ward@gov.im](mailto:john.ward@gov.im) or telephone +44 1624 685857.

## **Responding to this Consultation and Questions**

You can respond to this consultation online by clicking on the 'Online Survey' link below.

Alternatively, you can download a paper version of this consultation in the 'Related' section below and email it to [john.ward@gov.im](mailto:john.ward@gov.im) or post it to;

John Ward – Inland Fisheries Policy Manager  
Thie Slieau Whallian  
Foxdale Road  
St Johns  
Isle of Man  
IM4 3AS

## **What Happens Next?**

This consultation is being launched for a period of 6 weeks. After the consultation closes, the Department for Enterprise will review all responses made. Following this, an update will be provided.

A summary of consultation responses will be made available on this page no later than July 2027.

## **Benefits of Angling Restrictions**

Controls on angling methods and harvest quantities, towards a sustainable fishery.

Angling conservation measures are a voluntary or legislative tool used to manage fisheries by controlling harvesting methods, how many fish are taken and size restrictions to help protect and sustain fish populations. Catch-and-release of Atlantic salmon and the use of barbless hooks only, aims to improve salmon conservation by stopping the harvest of salmon, reducing harm caused by barbed hooks to improve survivability of released fish to continue their journey to spawn, increasing juvenile populations in the hope that they go on to survive to adulthood and repeat the cycle.

Introduced voluntarily for the 2026/27 season, with formal regulation proposed for 2027/28, this approach will allow a gradual transition for anglers.

## **Current Status of Isle of Man Atlantic Salmon**

Atlantic salmon are permitted to be caught by anglers under licence, with the present 'Other Waters' licence conditions allowing the taking and killing of one salmon per day (from 1 April to the 31 of October) with a minimum length of 45cm using bait (not including any species of crayfish or roe of any fish species), artificial flies and spoons or spinners (allowing barbed hooks, including treble hooks on spoons and spinners). Fishing must cease immediately on the capture and retention of a salmon. Only 'Season' Other Water licences are valid for fishing in the month of October (a prominent period where adult salmon migrate into rivers from the sea).

Angler's experience is that returning adult salmon are in decline, and the Department acknowledges the growing concerns of anglers who support changes to licence conditions currently allowing the exploitation of salmon.

International studies appear to support the notable decline of Atlantic salmon populations within the northern hemisphere, leading to the reclassification of the status of Atlantic salmon to being 'near threatened' of extinction.

Monitoring of Manx juvenile Atlantic salmon populations in main rivers across the Island has indicated that salmon populations are, generally, experiencing a gradual decline. This continual decline over the past 5-year period across the Island as identified by the ['IOM Juvenile Salmonid Monitoring Programme Report 2025'](#) (opens in a new tab) undertaken by the Department's Fisheries Division. Interestingly, salmon densities improved in 2025 as those graded as 'excellent to average' were represented in 37.5% over 16 tested sites (an increase from 14% in 2024 over 18 sites). Although affected, trout populations appear more resilient to adverse factors compared to salmon populations including barriers to fish passage, climate change among other influences. Salmon populations appear less resilient. Without aid, the future of Atlantic salmon populations in Manx rivers appears under threat.

## About you

### 1: Are you and Isle of Man Resident?

- Yes, I am
- No, I am not

### 2. Which option best describes your interest in responding to this consultation?

- Member of the public
- Isle of Man Government
- Business owner or Stakeholder
- Member of Tynwald
- Other (please specify)

Other:

### 3: Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

- Yes, I am (please state the organisation/industry below)
- No, I am not

Organisation/Industry:

Number of people or organisations represented:

### 4: Are you happy for us to contact you regarding your response if we need to?

- Yes, you can contact me (please leave your name and email below)
- No, please do not contact me

Name:

Email:

5: Please confirm with which one of the below you most closely identify.

- Angler
- Conservation or Environmental Organisation Member
- Landowner or Riparian Owner (adjacent to a watercourse)
- Researcher/Scientist
- Fisheries or Aquatic Industry Representative
- Developer
- Business/Tourism Operator (e.g. guiding, accommodation, outdoor recreation)
- Outdoor Recreation User (non-angling)
- Member of the public
- Other (please specify)

Other:

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6: Please confirm if you have ever personally experienced an incident related to salmon.

- Yes, as an angler
- Yes, as a member of the public
- No, I have not

7: May we publish your response?

Please read our [Privacy Policy](#) for more details and your rights.

**More Information**

- Publish in full – your name, organisation name, along with full answers may be published on the hub (your email will not be published)
- Publish anonymously – only your responses may be published on the hub (your name, organisation and email will not be published)
- Do not publish – nothing will be published publicly on the hub (your response will only be part of a larger summary response document)

(Required)

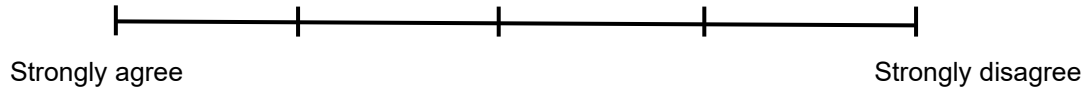
- Yes, you can publish my response in full
- Yes, you can publish my response anonymously
- No, please do not publish my response

## Questions

### Conservation measures on fishing for Atlantic salmon

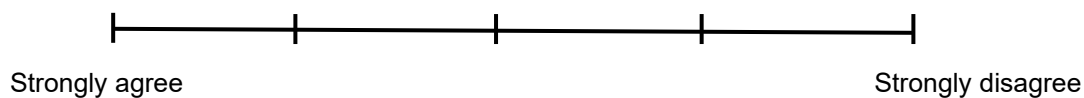
Question 1:

Do you agree Atlantic Salmon are a species at risk that are worth protecting?



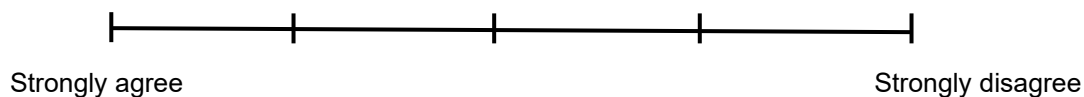
Question 2:

Do you agree with the implementation of catch and release on angling for Atlantic salmon as a voluntary measure going forward in all future years?



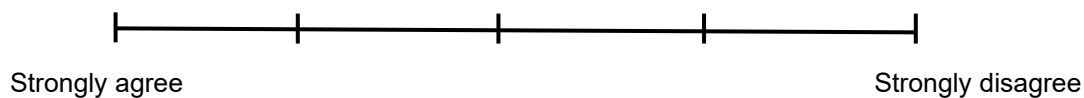
Question 3:

Do you agree with the implementation of catch and release on angling for Atlantic salmon as a mandatory measure, by way of regulations, for the 2027/28 season?



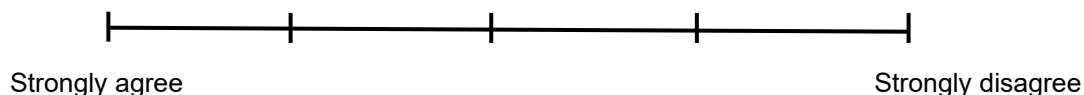
Question 4:

Do you agree on the implementation restrictions requiring the of use of barbless hooks only in all river angling as a voluntary measure going forward in all future years?



Question 5:

Do you agree with the implementation restrictions requiring the of use of barbless hooks only in all river angling as a mandatory measure, by way of regulations, for the 2027/28 season?

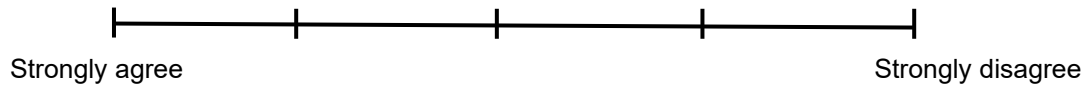


Question 6:

Do you agree with introducing measures, whereby all rivers could be temporarily closed to angling (including catch and release) during periods of excessively warm water temperatures, to protect fish and aid in their recovery after being caught?

The Department is aware that in other jurisdictions, temporary restrictions (river closures) may be placed on fishing for salmon, based on water temperature, to protect fish from potentially lethal heat stress. For example, in Ireland, certain rivers may be temporarily closed to angling (including catch and release) once water temperatures rise above 20 degrees Celsius. Warmer water also holds significantly

less dissolved oxygen, further increasing physiological stress on fish and reducing their ability to recover after being caught.



**Question 7:**

**Would any of the proposed legislative restrictions reduce your willingness to purchase a future licence?**

Yes

No

**Additional question**

**Development of a Long-Term Atlantic Salmon Management Plan**

**Question 6:**

The 'Department' is considering the development of a Long-Term Management Plan for Atlantic salmon, with input from the Recreational Fisheries Management Board.

**What matters do you think should be included for consideration within such a plan?**

**Please use the space provided below to provide any supplementary information to support your previous answers, or to leave any additional comments or suggestions for consideration.**