

SEA TROUT RECOGNITION



FRESH RUN SEA TROUT

Easily recognised by bright silver sides, white lower fins and loose, easily detached scales. Some carry sea lice which drop-off in fresh water within a few days. After 2 or 3 weeks they lose the silver and appear like dull coloured brown trout, lacking true red spots.

Mature sea trout vary widely in size depending on marine growth and longevity. Typically, at first spawning return they may be about 350-450 mm in body length and weigh around 0.5-1.5kg. Older specimens, which may have spawned several times, can range to in excess of 10kg, while maiden sea trout of this very large size can be found in the southern North Sea and the Baltic Sea.



KELT

Encountered in Springtime, well-mended kelts are silvery and can be mistaken for fresh run sea trout. They are normally slimmer in shape and can often be distinguished by whitish-silver flanks which lack the iridescent colours of fresh-run fish.

BREEDING COCK

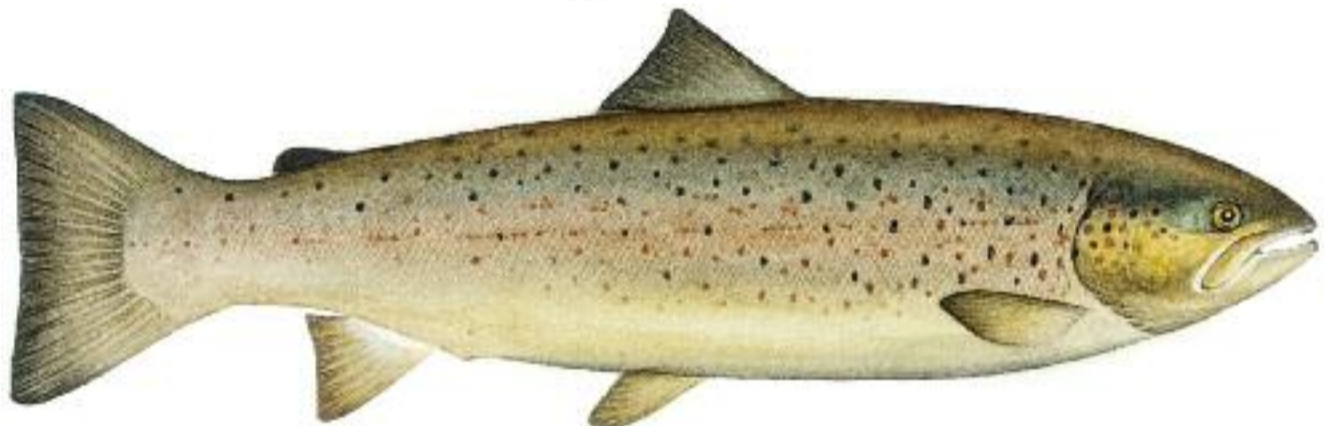
Coloured male sea trout can be indistinguishable from male brown trout which also spawn with sea trout hens. Males develop enlarged snouts and an obvious kype on the lower jaw – females retain normal head proportions at all life stages.



BREEDING HEN

Sea trout/brown trout breed in autumn when river temperatures reach about 6 degrees, usually in October/November.

Most are coloured (illustrated) but late-running fish may still be silver-sided.



HERLING, FINNOCK, WHITLING, PEAL, SEWIN ETC

These are young sea trout returning to their home rivers in the same year as their first migration. They depart as smolts in April/May and return from July onwards typically averaging around a half pound or ten inches long – those over 13 inches are usually mature one sea winter sea trout.

Unlike salmon grilse many of these small sea trout are sexually immature. They should not be killed in excess – they are the large sea trout of the future.



Sea trout are sea-going brown trout – their young (below) are indistinguishable until those about to migrate to sea become silvery smolts (above).

Most British sea trout are females, their male partners often remaining behind in the rivers as resident brown trout.



LIFE HISTORY & CONSERVATION

The Eurasian Trout *Salmo Trutta*.L. comprises a great number of local races which over time have adapted to particular habitats. Even small tributary streams can produce a variety of life options, some trout remaining as freshwater residents, especially males, while others migrate to richer feeding grounds downstream in rivers, lakes, estuaries - or to the open sea where they become silver sea trout.

The migratory tendency varies widely. Trout above impassable falls lose it almost completely while rivers with good breeding habitat but limited feeding have a strong tendency to produce sea trout.

Enhancement and conservation of sea trout is usually concentrated on three fronts –

Monitoring of trout at different life stages to determine their success and to educate the public and those responsible for river management on enhancement.

Improving the freshwater habitat to increase the numbers of trout going to sea.

Using local trout for any stocking as these are most likely to be best adapted to local river and sea conditions.

It is useful for fishermen to recognise that on sea trout rivers the resident brown trout, both large and small, are likely to have genetic tendencies to migrate and become sea trout - and should be conserved accordingly.