

Anglers are catching on – catch & release helps to save wild Atlantic salmon.

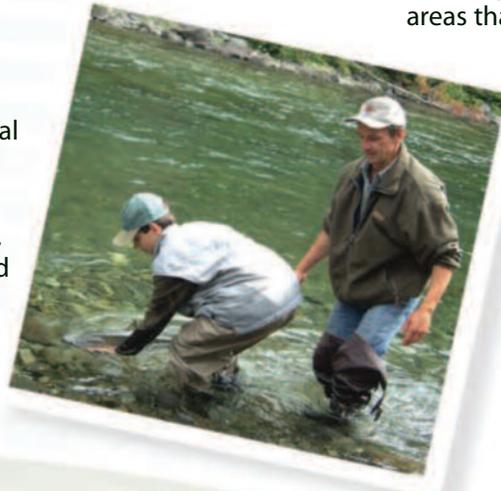
How to SAFELY Release a Salmon

“The best method of releasing a salmon is to leave it in the water and touch nothing but the hook with fingers or pliers.”

“Whatever the method, care combined with speed, will give the fish the best chance of survival.”

Lee Wulff, *Atlantic Salmon Journal*
Winter 1964/65

- Use barbless or pinched hooks
- Retrieve your fish quickly; release it immediately
- Keep the fish in the water
- Use rubber or knotless cotton net, if one must be used
- Cut the leader if necessary
- Remove the hook carefully
- Hold the fish gently in natural swimming position, facing upstream until it revives
- Don't pump the fish. That is, don't move the fish back and forth in the water.



Good Reasons to Release Grilse

Released Grilse:

- Maintain genetic diversity that salmon populations need to survive. If a family suffers major losses of large salmon, its gene pool will still be present because of the spawning of its grilse members
- Can “grow up” to return later as larger salmon
- Survive, resulting in better fishing
- Divert predators’ attention from larger fish
- Travel in shoals with large salmon, making them feel safer and behave more naturally. This helps them move further upstream to spawn in areas that might not otherwise be seeded.

Grilse vs Large Salmon:

Spawning populations consist of varying proportions of small salmon called grilse (fork length <63cm) and large salmon (fork length 63cm or more).

Anglers and guides who practice and encourage live release help reverse the salmon’s decline and display leadership in our fight to conserve wild salmon.



How should hooks be removed?

Very Carefully

In quiet water, bring the wild salmon quickly within reach. Leaving the salmon in water and without squeezing it, remove the hook carefully with pliers or thumb and forefinger. If a net must be used, it should be rubber or knotless cotton. If necessary, cut the leader near the fly and spare the fish.

Can equipment help in Live Release?

Yes. Begin by using hooks with pinched barbs

Barbless or hooks with the barbs pinched are easiest to remove. Flatten barbs with pliers. Barbless hooks also reduce wounds to juvenile fish that are accidentally caught, increasing their rate of survival.

The ATLANTIC SALMON FEDERATION

our regional councils and affiliates support live release.

The Science of Live Release

“Peer-reviewed science supports live release as a proven and effective conservation tool.”

Dr. Fred Whoriskey,
ASF Vice-President, Research & Environment

Studies in North America and Europe have shown live release works, and in some instances Atlantic salmon have been angled 2 and 3 times.

Science has shown that virtually all Atlantic salmon will survive when released, as long as the angler uses the proper techniques, refrains from angling in overly warm water, and does not overplay the Atlantic salmon. Like athletes sprinting on a track, Atlantic salmon build up lactic acid in their muscle tissues when they are being played.

The Key is Oxygen – The fish need oxygen in order to recover and continue their journey.

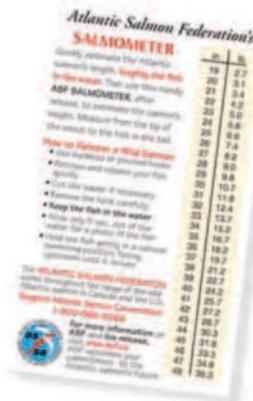
To recover, Atlantic salmon need:

- careful handling by the angler to reduce stress
- to remain in the water where they can breathe and reduce the oxygen deficit in their tissues
- to be held in an upstream position for water to flow more easily across their gills



How to Photograph a Release

ASF appreciates anglers and guides who develop the skills of taking fantastic images with the fish held IN the water, not out of it.



A SALMOMETER allows anglers to quickly estimate the weight of their salmon without harming it through overhandling. Download this from our website, www.asf.ca

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Published by
the Atlantic Salmon Federation's
Communications and Education Program

Is there first-aid for fish?

Absolutely

An exhausted fish needs help. Support the salmon underwater in a natural position facing the current, handling it as little as possible. Severe exhaustion reduces the salmon's odds of surviving. Play the fish sensibly and keep it in the water.



Can I take anything home? Of Course!

Take a photograph for your wall and to share. But remember to keep the fish in the water.

Are there times not to fish?

Certainly

Wild Atlantic salmon have a much better chance of survival when angled under ideal conditions. High water temperatures and low water levels are particularly stressful to Atlantic salmon. Anglers who practice responsible angling stop fishing in these conditions.

