

## SEA TROUT FISHERY STATISTICS - 2017 SEASON



### Summary

- The total reported rod catch (retained and released) of sea trout for 2017 is 18,296. Catches have declined over much of the period since 1952, when our records began. Total reported rod catch in 2017 is the fourth lowest on record and 90% of the previous 5 year average.
- The proportion of the total rod catch accounted for by catch and release in 2017 is 84%. This is the highest value reported since records began in 1994. A proportion of fish released from the rod fishery may be re-caught and hence inflate the catch statistics by appearing in the reported data more than once.
- Reported catch and effort for the fixed engine and net & coble fisheries were among the lowest recorded by either fishery since records began in 1952.

This publication summarises the sea trout fishery statistics based on returns from proprietors, occupiers or agents of fisheries throughout Scotland for the 2017 fishing season. These data are derived from 1,963 forms returned from 2,116 forms issued (93% return rate). Final published statistics for the previous 10 years have been based on return rates of between 93% and 95%.

These statistics are part of a time series which began in 1952 and are collected and collated by Marine Scotland Science.

### Salmon Fishery Regulations

Statutory conservation measures are in place to regulate both the killing of salmon in the early months of the fishing season (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence/spring>), in coastal waters and on stocks with poor conservation status (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence/status>).

Although specifically related to the catches of salmon, these regulations may have an impact on the catch and effort data reported by Scottish sea trout fisheries as many target both species.

## CATCH AND EFFORT REPORTED BY SCOTTISH SEA TROUT FISHERIES IN 2017

### The rod and line fishery

In total, 2,983 sea trout were reported caught and retained in the rod and line fishery. A further 15,313 sea trout were reported caught and released. We have no comprehensive time series of fishing effort information associated with the rod and line fishery.

Total rod catches (retained and released) of sea trout for Scotland as a whole have declined over much of the period since 1952, when our records began. The total reported rod catch in 2017 of 18,296 was the fourth lowest in the time series and 90% of the previous 5-year average (Figure 1).

Finnock are sea trout which have spent less than a year at sea and are making their first return to fresh water. They may also be known as whitling or herling. Finnock catches have been reported since 2004. The total rod catch of finnock in 2017 was 7,781 83% of the previous 5-year average (Figure 1).

### Catch and release

The proportion of the rod catch accounted for by catch and release has generally increased since 1994, when catch and release information

was first recorded (Figure 2) and accounted for 84% of the total rod catch of sea trout in 2017. In addition 96% of finnock taken by the rod fishery were subsequently released in 2017. A proportion of fish released from the rod fishery may be re-caught and hence inflate the catch statistics by appearing in the reported data more than once.

### The net fisheries

726 sea trout were reported caught and retained in the fixed engine fishery. On the Solway, Haaf net fisheries reported a

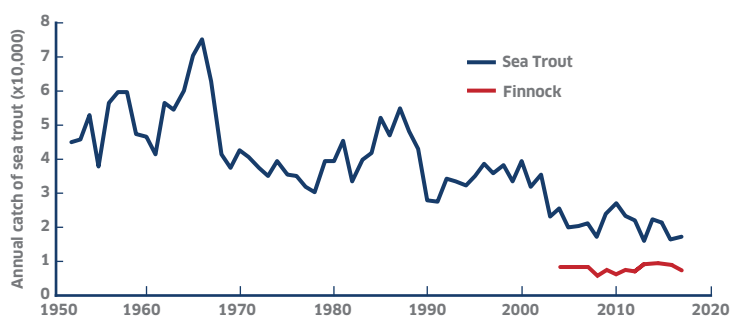


FIGURE 1  
ROD AND LINE FISHERY.

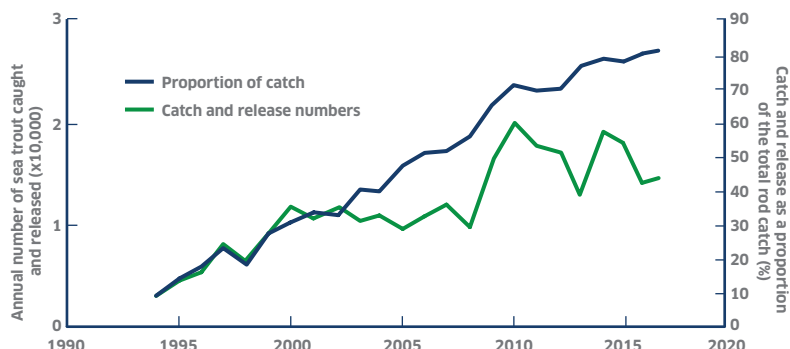


FIGURE 2  
CATCH AND RELEASE, ROD AND LINE FISHERY.



total fishing effort of 234 net months. These fisheries do not yield data that can be easily combined with returns from gear types in the rest of Scotland and data from this region are generally omitted when calculating a national index for fixed engine fishing effort. In 2017, fixed engine effort for Scotland excluding Solway was reported as 10 trap months.

A total of 2,205 sea trout was reported caught and retained in the net & coble fishery, and the reported effort was 40 crew months.

Reported catch and effort in both net fisheries have declined over much of the period covered by our records and remain at historically low levels (Figures 3 & 4). In 2017, reported catch and effort for the fixed engine and net & coble fisheries were among the lowest recorded by either fishery since records began in 1952.

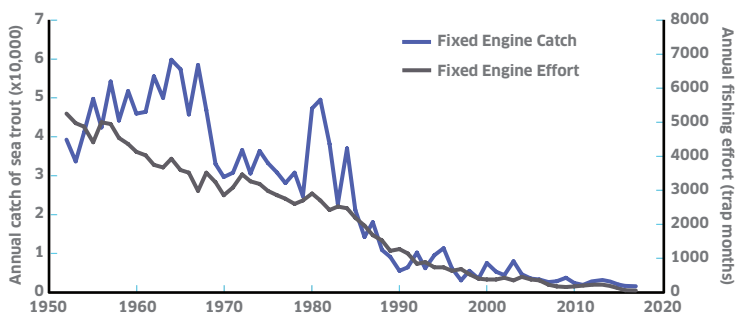


FIGURE 3  
FIXED ENGINE FISHERY.

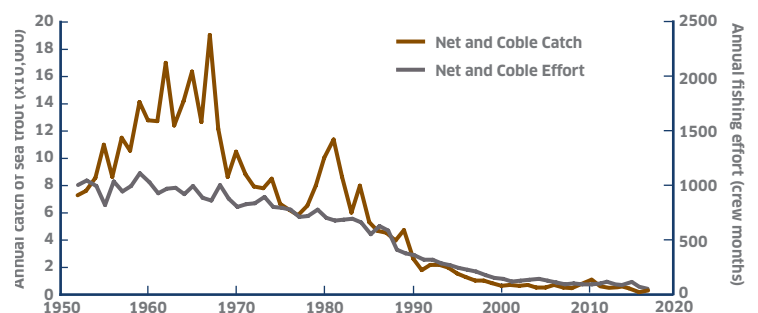


FIGURE 4  
NET AND COBLE FISHERY.



Both catch and effort for fixed engine fisheries were the lowest recorded since records began in 1952. For net & coble fisheries, effort was also the lowest since records began, while catch was the second lowest.

## The catch by fishing method

In 2017, 86% of the total annual reported catch was accounted for by the rod fisheries. Fixed engine and net & coble fisheries comprised just under 4% and 10% respectively. Restricting the analysis to the retained catch, the rods accounted for 51% of the catch compared to 12% and 37% for the fixed engine and net & coble fisheries.

## Contact

If you have a specific request for Scottish salmon and sea trout fishery information, not available at the links provided on this page, please contact us directly at [ms.catchform@gov.scot](mailto:ms.catchform@gov.scot)

## Downloads

Topic sheet no. 67 explains how we collect the catch statistics.

Topic sheet no. 68 summarises the salmon fishery statistics for the 2017 fishing season.

Both topic sheets are available for download at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Publications/TopicSheets/tslist>

Summary data for fishing seasons 1952 to 2017 are available for download at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/science/Publications/stats/SalmonSeaTroutCatches>

These data are provided as the most complete at the time of publication. Our records are amended when further information becomes available and updated annually in April when the statistics for the most recent fishing season are published.