

FAQ's

Fish Identification

How can you tell the difference between Salmon and Sea Trout?

Sea-Trout tails are square and thick at the wrist whilst Salmon tails are concaved and slender at the wrist. Spots on a sea-Trout continue below the lateral line whilst Salmon have fewer spots below the lateral line. The eyes on a Sea-Trout are further forward in the head than the Salmon. Finally if you're still unsure count the scales between the adipose fin and the lateral line, a count of less than twelve, it is a Salmon, more than twelve and it's a Sea-Trout.

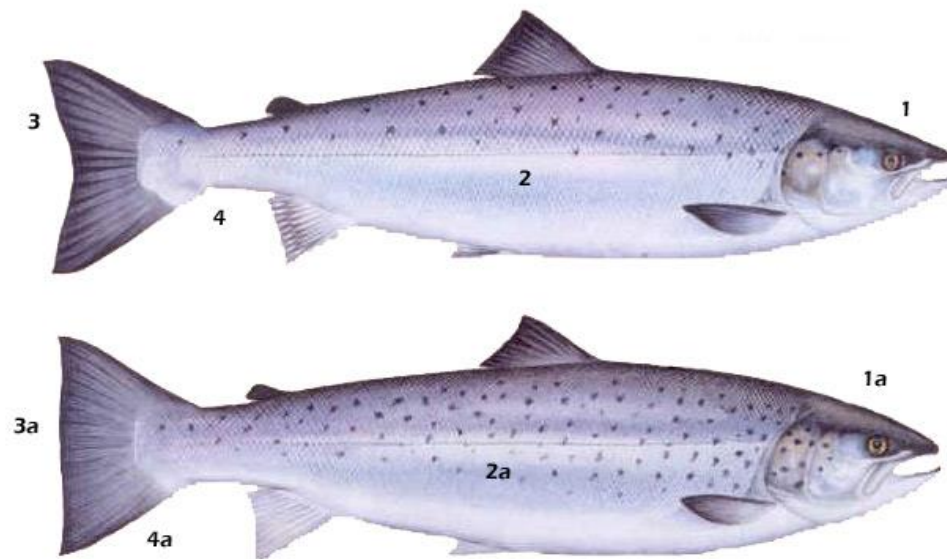
	Salmon	Sea Trout
General appearance	Slender and streamlined	More round and thickset
Head	Pointed	More Round
Position of the Eye	Maxilla (bony plate usually alongside mouth) does not extend beyond rear rear of eye	Maxilla extends beyond eye
Colour	Relatively few spots	Often heavily spotted
Scale count (number from adipose fin to lateral line)	10-13	13-16
Fork of tail	Usually forked	Usually square or convex
Wrist of tail	Slender	Broader

How can we tell Sea Trout and Brown Trout apart?

It is sometimes quite difficult. Fresh-run, silvery, black-spotted, sea trout are obvious, but maturing specimens gradually darken on their return to fresh water, becoming more and more like brown trout. This fact, coupled with the extensive morphological variation among brown trout, can make recognition tricky. Normally, adult sea trout are bigger than brown trout found in the same waters, but there are many exceptions. Male sea trout tend to lack the truly red spots found on many resident brown trout, although they often have orange ones. Other useful indicators of brown trout, such as haloes around spots and black and white edging to fins, are not always present. Scale reading by experts provides some scientific validation or, more certainly, biochemical analyses for levels of strontium in scales (or bones), or marine oils in tissue samples. The species composition of internal parasites is another useful indicator of feeding at sea, but this is another test that requires the specimen fish to be sacrificed. In practice, judgement by anglers as to whether a coloured trout is a sea trout or a brown trout must take account of the likely prevalence of sea trout in that system.



Salmo Salar - The Atlantic Salmon



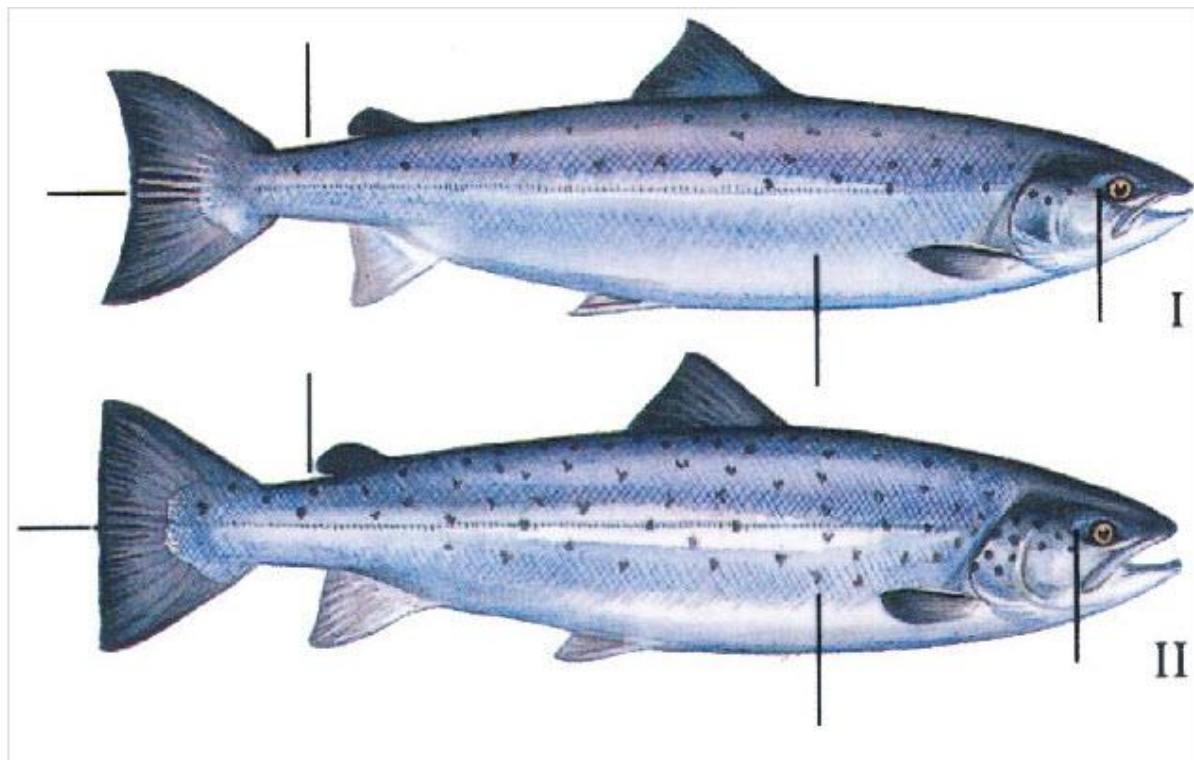
Salmo Trutta - The Sea Trout

Atlantic Salmon

1. The Salmon's eye extends no further than the mouth
2. There are few markings below the fishes lateral line
3. The tail of a Salmon is concave
4. The Salmon has a narrow tail base with a noticeable wrist

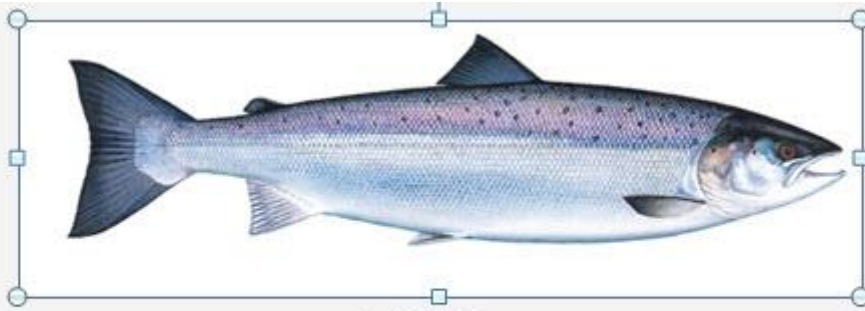
Sea Trout

- 1a. The Sea Trout's eye extends further than its mouth
- 2a. Larger number of markings below lateral line
- 3a. The Tail of a Sea Trout will be Square, even convex (Immature Sea Trout may have a concave tail)
- 4a. The tail base is wide, with no noticeable wrist.



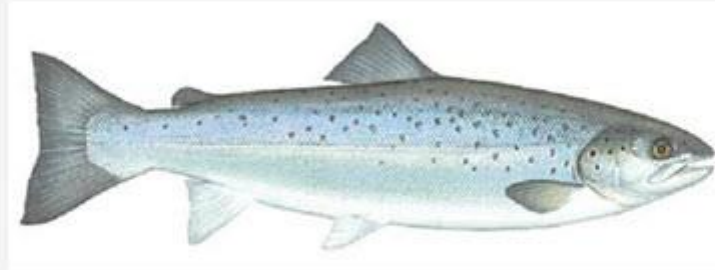
Salmon (I) can be distinguished from large sea trout (II) by a more streamlined shape, concave tail, slimmer tail wrist, upper jaw reaching no further than rear of the eye, few if any black spots below lateral line, 10-15 (usually 11-13) scales counted obliquely forward from adipose fin to lateral line - trout have 13-16.





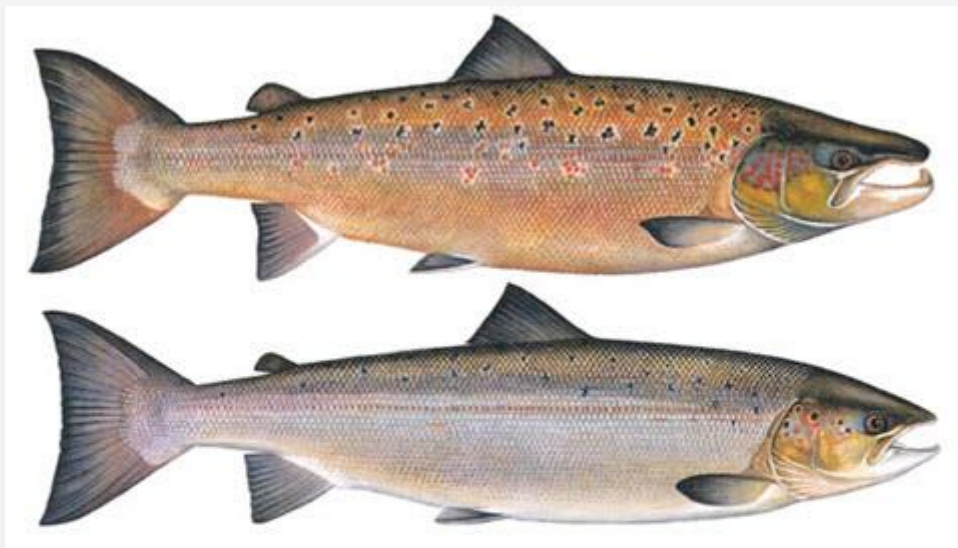
Fresh Run Salmon

Recognised by the pristine condition and bright silver flanks. Fish straight from salt water have loose, easily detached scales and many carry sea lice which drop off within a few days. Hen salmon (illustrated) have a tiny kype on the lower jaw but unlike cocks they retain normal head proportions while in the river.



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.

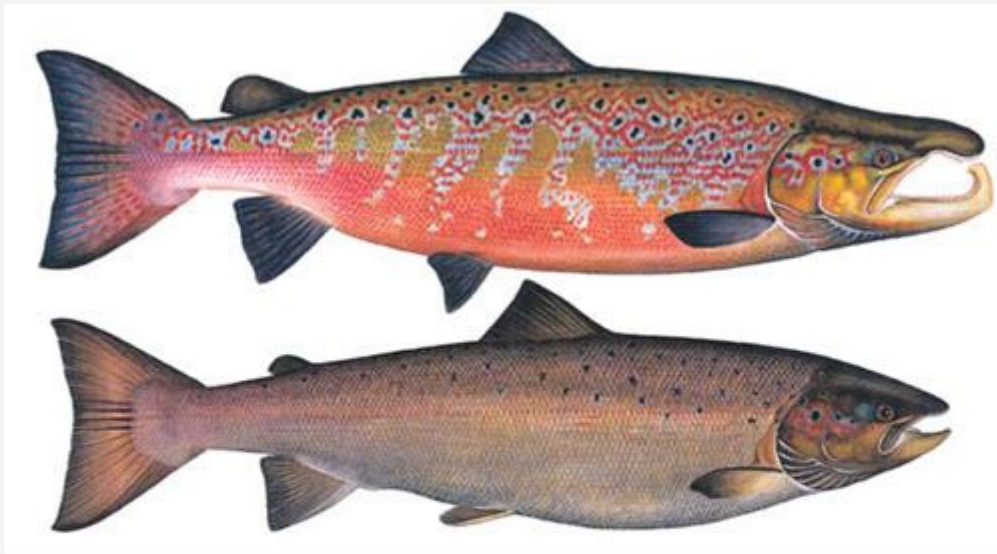


Maturing Cock and Hen

Cock: The combination of "tartan" colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals, and the enlarged adipose fin, are the most consistent indicators of maturity.

Hen: These are usually less coloured than cocks of similar age and they never have enlarged jaws. This one will have spent a few weeks in river or estuary - note the coloured head and lack of true silver flanks.





Cock and Hen In Breeding Dress

Cock: The combination of 'tartan' colours is typical although shades vary - the fully developed kype, used in fighting rivals is the most consistent indicator of maturity.

Hen: This is a summer fish - ~~spawners~~ are often darker by spawning time while late entrants may still be silver flanked. Fully mature hens have soft, swollen bellies and spawning is imminent if they also have protruding vents.



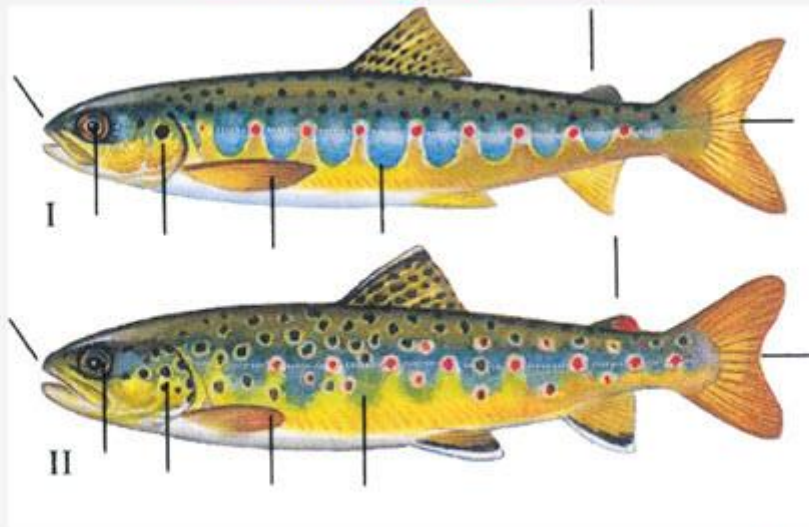
Breeding cock, ~~Colquhoun~~ male sea trout can be indistinguishable from male brown trout which also spawn with sea trout hens. Males develop enlarged snouts and an obvious ~~kype~~ on the lower jaw - females retain normal head proportions at all life stages.



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.



Difference between a salmon parr, salmon smolt and a young trout.



Salmon parr (I) can normally be distinguished from young brown/sea trout (II) by the more streamlined shape, deeply forked tail, longer pectoral fin, lack of orange on adipose fin, smaller mouth, sharper snout, only 1-4 spots on gill cover (often one large spot), well defined parr marks.



Herring, finnock, whitling, peal, scawm etc. These are young sea trout returning to their home rivers in the same year as their first migration. They depart as spotties 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.

