

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO FISHING SEASON - RIVER DART

The Following are proposals for discussion/agreement with Environment Agency.

The current position is that the rod Salmon Fishing Season on the River Dart runs from 1st February - 30th September. This is a historic position and reflects the position many decades ago when the Dart was primarily a spring run salmon river. In more recent years more and more of the salmon run appears to be later in the season. There is a distinct lack of management information about the extent of the run after the current season ends, but eyewitness accounts are of fresh salmon entering the system in good numbers after 30th September. The Dart, in common with its neighbouring river the Teign, where a similar application is currently underway, is unfairly treated in comparison with other South Devon rivers that enjoy far longer seasons, in some cases extending to 15th December. Its other neighbouring river, the Avon, has a season expiring on 30th November. Climate change appears to be resulting in longer drier summers, which is seriously affecting angling potential. The above Association, partly as a result of this, is facing a shortfall in Membership applications. The intention of the Association is therefore to formally request a season extension for two main reasons:-

a) to provide management information as to the extent of the run post 30th September

b) to provide increased time for anglers to enjoy the fishing on the river.

At all times, this Association is conscious of the need to continue its efforts towards ensuring a sustainable fishery and will do nothing that will endanger the salmon stocks. For that reason the following are our proposals:-

- 1. A season extension for rod and line fishing only be granted to 31st October.**
- 2. All salmon caught during the period 30th September - 31st October to be returned to the river.**
- 3. This is to be reviewed and if appropriate agreed on an annual basis.**
- 4. Existing method restrictions, both existing Byelaws and voluntary Association Regulations, to remain, but in addition the use of barbless or debarbed hooks is essential.**
- 5. Any angler fishing for salmon in the period 30th September to 31st October will**

maintain a full record of fishing effort, method, fish seen, fish hooked, fish landed and released, together with estimated sizes based on length of the fish.

6. These records will be made available to the Association Secretary immediately on completion of the season and will then be shared with the DFA Secretary and the Environment Agency.

7. Those Members of the Association intending to fish during this extension period will register their intention with the Association Secretary prior to 30th September, who will in turn keep a record of such named anglers.

8. Any Member found in breach of these proposals, which will form part of Association Regulations, will face disciplinary action and sanction by the Association Committee. This could result in loss of Membership.

These proposals are entirely those of the above Association, but it is hoped that should other Members of the Dart Fisheries Association wish to see the season extension extended to the whole river that they will support this application and mirror the proposals in their entirety.

Some comment has been made in the Committee of the above Association, who fully support the above proposals, that should the DFA wish to place an upper limit on the extent of the river to which these proposals relate e.g. no season extension above Dartmeet to protect the spawning grounds, then they would support that application.

This proposal is submitted to the joint EA/DFA/DAA/ Netsmen management meeting on 8th May 2007

David Pakes
Chairman - DAA