

**RIVER THURSO, CAITHNESS**  
**FISHING TERMS & CONDITIONS – 2025**



**THE FISHINGS**

There are twelve beats, with up to two rods on each, moving downstream by two beats each day, allowing both Upper, Middle and Lower water to be fished in one week. The beats provide a wonderful variety of fishing and whilst much of the river has a fine running character, some beats, particularly lower 3, as well as sections of 6, 7 and 12 are long and deep. These pools are invaluable for the conservation of fish stocks in hot, dry weather conditions and with a good wind to ruffle the water, they can be very productive. The beats vary in length from just under one mile to three and a quarter miles, each having a variety of pools. (see [www.riverthurso.com](http://www.riverthurso.com) for detailed beat and pool descriptions.)

**ROD CATCHES FOR BEATS 2 – 13 (SEASON 11 JANUARY – 5 OCTOBER)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5 yr ave	10 yr ave
Jan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb	8	10	3	1	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
Mar	39	30	14	18	8	25	12	26	10	5	4	3	6	10	4	5	11
Apr	108	47	62	41	32	39	49	82	30	30	0	14	40	57	34	29	38
May	186	246	115	222	84	186	242	133	53	88	8	102	66	94	64	67	104
Jun	202	217	316	128	90	292	205	308	27	164	81	76	100	39	171	93	146
July	324	190	557	66	53	448	957	238	6	260	323	49	93	276	177	184	283
Aug	1,026	761	535	126	464	479	455	327	30	476	43	31	69	143	86	74	214
Sept	986	642	559	308	171	299	178	462	213	517	110	137	322	282	420	254	294
Oct	143	66	108	38	15	23	105	168	136	234	46	220	91	102	150	122	128
<b>total</b>	<b>3022</b>	<b>2210</b>	<b>2269</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>1791</b>	<b>2203</b>	<b>1745</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>1774</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>1216</b>

- Fishing is by fair fly only, with a maximum of 2 rods per beat and fishing with bait, prawn, worm, spinner, spoon or any other lure is expressly forbidden. Fishing is from both banks and breast waders are not necessary.
- It is a prerequisite of fishing on the River Thurso that anglers sign and deliver **GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS DECLARATION FORMS to the Senior Ghillie (Geordie Doull) upon arrival or before their first day at the River, prior to commencing fishing. Anglers who have not signed and delivered the Declaration will not be permitted to fish.**
- Salmon Conservation – anglers are reminded that under the Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001, it is illegal to sell salmon and sea trout caught by rod and line. In accordance with the Scottish Government’s statutory catch and release regulations, all salmon caught prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April must be returned to the River. From 1<sup>st</sup> April until 15<sup>th</sup> of June any fish incapable of being safely returned (ie bleeders) must be handed to the Senior Ghillie (Geordie Doull) on the day the fish is removed from the River. From 16<sup>th</sup> June until 5<sup>th</sup> October, anglers fishing for a week may retain up to two fish, provided they do not exceed 8lbs in weight or 70cm in length. Treble hooks are not to be used at any time during the season and from 1<sup>st</sup> September until the end of the season (5<sup>th</sup> October) all hooks must be barbless.
- Trout fishing can be arranged through either Geordie Doull or Hugo Ross.
- Ghillies – if fishing between weeks 11 to 39 and a personal ghillie is required, this should be organised in advance through the Senior Ghillie or Fishing Administrator (Jessica Dreaves). Personal ghillie charges must be paid to the Ulbster Arms Hotel 8 weeks prior to arrival.
- Accommodation - discounted hotel rates are available for anglers who stay at the Ulbster Arms Hotel during their fishing holiday. For further details, please contact Jessica at the Ulbster Arms Hotel.
- **Geordie Doull (Senior Ghillie)**, 07734 601562, email [geordie@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk](mailto:geordie@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk)
- **Ulbster Arms Hotel**, Bridge Street, Halkirk, Caithness, KW12 6XY, phone: 01847 831641. email: [info@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk](mailto:info@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk), web: [www.ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk](http://www.ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk) and [www.riverthurso.com](http://www.riverthurso.com)
- **Jessica Dreaves (Fishing Administrator)** - [fishing@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk](mailto:fishing@ulbsterarmshotel.co.uk), phone 01847 831641.
- **Hugo Ross Fishing Tackle**, Wick, web: [www.hugoross.co.uk](http://www.hugoross.co.uk) phone: 01955 604200.

### **FISHING RENTS – 2025 SEASON (for reservations confirmed before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025)**

**Rent/Rod/Week (incl VAT), from weeks 11 to 39, 2 rods per beat and excludes ghillie and Ulbster Arms Hotel accommodation charges. Prices for 3 days fishing equates to 60% of the weekly cost.**

Week 1	11 Jan	to	11 Jan	POA	Week 20	19 May	to	24 May	£1,300
Week 2	13 Jan	to	18 Jan	POA	Week 21	26 May	to	31 May	£1,300
Week 3	20 Jan	to	25 Jan	POA	Week 22	2 Jun	to	7 Jun	£1,300
Week 4	27 Jan	to	1 Feb	POA	Week 23	9 Jun	to	14 Jun	£1,300
Week 5	3 Feb	to	8 Feb	POA	Week 24	16 Jun	to	21 Jun	£1,300
Week 6	10 Feb	to	15 Feb	POA	Week 25	23 Jun	to	28 Jun	£1,300
Week 7	17 Feb	to	22 Feb	POA	Week 26	30 Jun	to	5 Jul	£1,400
Week 8	24 Feb	to	1 Mar	POA	Week 27	7 Jul	to	12 Jul	£1,400
Week 9	3 Mar	to	8 Mar	POA	Week 28	14 Jul	to	19 Jul	£1,400
Week 10	10 Mar	to	15 Mar	POA	Week 29	21 Jul	to	26 Jul	£1,400
Week 11	17 Mar	to	22 Mar	£350	Week 30	28 Jul	to	2 Aug	£1,400
Week 12	24 Mar	to	29 Mar	£350	Week 31	4 Aug	to	9 Aug	£1,400
Week 13	31 Mar	to	5 Apr	£400	Week 32	11 Aug	to	16 Aug	£1,400
Week 14	7 Apr	to	12 Apr	£600	Week 33	18 Aug	to	23 Aug	£1,400
Week 15	14 Apr	to	19 Apr	£660	Week 34	25 Aug	to	30 Aug	£1,400
Week 16	21 Apr	to	26 Apr	£860	Week 35	1 Sep	to	6 Sep	£1,400
Week 17	28 Apr	to	3 May	£1,050	Week 36	8 Sep	to	13 Sep	£1,400
Week 18	5 May	to	10 May	£1,125	Week 37	15 Sep	to	20 Sep	£1,400
Week 19	12 May	to	17 May	£1,250	Week 38	22 Sep	to	27 Sep	£1,400
					Week 39	29 Sep	to	4 Oct	£1,400

## **DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT POLICY**

- Discounted bed and breakfast accommodation will continue to be available to anglers at the Ulbster Arms Hotel. Reservations will be taken for bed and breakfast, which are secured by the payment of a 25% deposit. Dinners, packed lunches, drinks, refreshments, etc, if taken, will be charged to room accounts and settled upon departure.
- Balances (ie typically 75%) of fishing and hotel bed and breakfast charges must be paid a minimum of 8 weeks prior to arrival. The non-payment of balances will be treated as a deemed cancellation.
- Deposits and balance payments are non-refundable, non-returnable and non-transferrable in the event of cancellation, non-arrival or early departure.
- Deposit and balance payments should be made by BACs to: Ulbster Arms Ltd,  
account number: 06103537, sort-code: 80-20-00

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

- It is a strong recommendation that clients have appropriate travel insurance.

## **ACCOMMODATION AND CATERING**

- As in previous years there are different room types available at the Ulbster Arms Hotel to suit individual budgets.
- The working assumptions for 2025 are as follows:
  - Breakfasts: In the Dining Room – on pre-agreed timings.
  - Packed Lunches: We continue to be committed to reducing single use plastics and package waste, whilst always striving to improve quality and provide guests with value for money. The simplified ordering system will be in place again for 2025 season.
  - Dinners: Evening food will continue to be available from 4.30pm until 8.30pm and fisherman can either dine in the Hotel restaurant or lounge bar.

# THURSO RIVER CONSERVATION STRATEGY - 2025

Anglers are reminded that under the Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001, it is illegal to sell salmon and sea trout caught by rod and line.

The catch and release provisions for 2025 will be:

- Period 11<sup>th</sup> January – 15<sup>th</sup> June

In accordance with the Scottish Government's statutory catch and release regulations, all salmon caught prior to 1st April must be returned to the River.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April until 15<sup>th</sup> of June any fish incapable of being safely returned (ie bleeders) must be handed to the Senior Ghillie (Geordie Doull) on the day the fish is removed from the River.

- Period 16<sup>th</sup> June – 5<sup>th</sup> October

Anglers visiting for a week may retain up to two fish provided they do not exceed 8lbs in weight/70cm in length.

Anglers visiting for less than a week may retain one fish provided it does not exceed 8lbs in weight/70cm in length.

I trust all fishermen who care for the river and its salmon will support our strategy.

## GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS

*Gyrodactylus salaris* is a parasite which infects the skin, gills and fins of salmon, trout and some other types of fish in fresh water. It is less than half a millimetre in size, so small that it is barely visible to the naked eye. Despite this, it can cause serious damage in some strains of Atlantic salmon.

The effects of the disease are so serious that salmon stocks have now been lost completely from more than 20 Norwegian rivers, with the particular races of salmon in the affected rivers being lost forever. *Gyrodactylus salaris* does not occur in UK rivers but experiments carried out in Norway have shown that our salmon, like those of Norway, are killed by parasite. It is therefore essential that the parasite is not introduced into UK waters.

To eliminate *Gyrodactylus salaris* from affected rivers, all types of fish capable of harbouring the parasite must be removed which would involve poisoning whole catchments. Such remedial work is destructive, difficult, very expensive and likely to take many years. It may also not be successful.

*Gyrodactylus salaris* is a listed notifiable disease and legislation is in place to prevent the transfer of live salmon and trout (the main hosts for the parasite) to British waters. This has now been supplemented by EU legislation that recognises the special status of the UK as being proven free of the parasite.

This parasite is very hardy and may be inadvertently introduced by fishermen. It is capable of surviving for several days in damp conditions such as plastic bags, wet angling equipment (eg bags, waders, landing nets, lines) and the wet surface of dead fish (eg bait fish). The parasite can also survive on other fish species including the eel. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure that movement of these other species takes place strictly in accordance with statutory fish health requirements. As the parasite has a direct life cycle and reproduces very rapidly, **it is possible that even a single specimen imported by accident to a previously unaffected river would be capable of starting an epidemic in a very short time.**

Further information can be obtained from:

Fisheries Research Services, Marine Laboratory, PO Box 101, Victoria Road, Aberdeen AB11 9DB  
Tel: 01224 876544 Fax: 01224 295511 Email: [FCB.gsalaris@marlab.ac.uk](mailto:FCB.gsalaris@marlab.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.marlab.ac.uk](http://www.marlab.ac.uk)

**GYRODACTYLUS SALARIS  
ANGLER DECLARATION**

**Please give this signed declaration to Geordie Doull (senior ghillie - phone: 07734 601562),  
or Jessica Dreaves (fishing coordinator – 01847 831641) or another Thurso ghillie  
ON ARRIVAL AT THE THURSO AND BEFORE COMMENCING FISHING.**

Gyrodactylus salaris (GS) is the greatest threat to wild salmon in our Scottish rivers, and the UK as a whole. It is a parasitic freshwater fluke which is indigenous to rivers in parts of Russia, Norway and Sweden, where salmon have evolved resistance to it. However, GS has spread to rivers in Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain and Portugal where native salmon have no resistance, resulting in mass mortality of juvenile fish. In Norway infected rivers lost 98% of their salmon within 5 years. Infected rivers must be poisoned to remove all fish hosts, and barriers erected to stop salmon entering the river to spawn and generate more hosts. GS can survive for 5 to 7 days without a host in damp conditions (**eg angling clothing, waders, wet reels, lines or landing nets**).

Currently the UK is GS-free. The economic and ecological consequences of GS entering the country would be catastrophic. Please do your part to prevent GS from decimating our wild salmon by signing this Angler Declaration **before fishing**.

**ANGLER DECLARATION**

A I declare that none of my fishing equipment has been outside the United Kingdom in the three months prior to the commencement of my fishing on .....  
(insert date)

Signed ..... Print Name .....  
(Fishing Tenant)

B I declare that my fishing equipment **has** been used outside the united Kingdom in the three months prior to the commencement of my fishing on .....(insert date) and that it has been properly sterilised adopting one of the following methods (*please tick one of the following*):

Method A: Drying to a minimum of 20°C for at least two days

Method B: Heating to above 60°C for at least one hour

Method C: Deep freezing for at least one day

Method D: Immersion of materials in a solution of, or addition of one of the following chemicals to water to the concentration indicated for a **minimum** of 10 minutes:

Virkon 1%

Wescodyne 1%

Sodium Chloride (common salt) 3%

Sodum Hydroxide 0.2%

*NB The chemicals above may be available from agricultural chemical suppliers. The use of trade names is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply endorsement of any particular product. Users should check that their use does not damage their equipment.*

Signed ..... Print Name .....  
(Fishing Tenant)

C I declare that my fishing equipment has been used outside the United Kingdom in ..... (country) in the three months prior to the commencement of my fishing on .....(insert date) and has **not** been sterilised.

I agree that it will be sterilised by the fishery proprietors before I commence fishing and I understand that this may result in a delay in the start of my fishing.

Signed ..... Print Name .....  
(Fishing Tenant)