

## 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)