

Reporting pink salmon in Scottish waters



Photo © Ness District Salmon Fishery Board

Pink salmon

Pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) originates in the Pacific and is not native to Scottish waters. The species was introduced into Russian rivers in the 1960s to support fishing activity and in recent years has spread further south and west into the Atlantic.

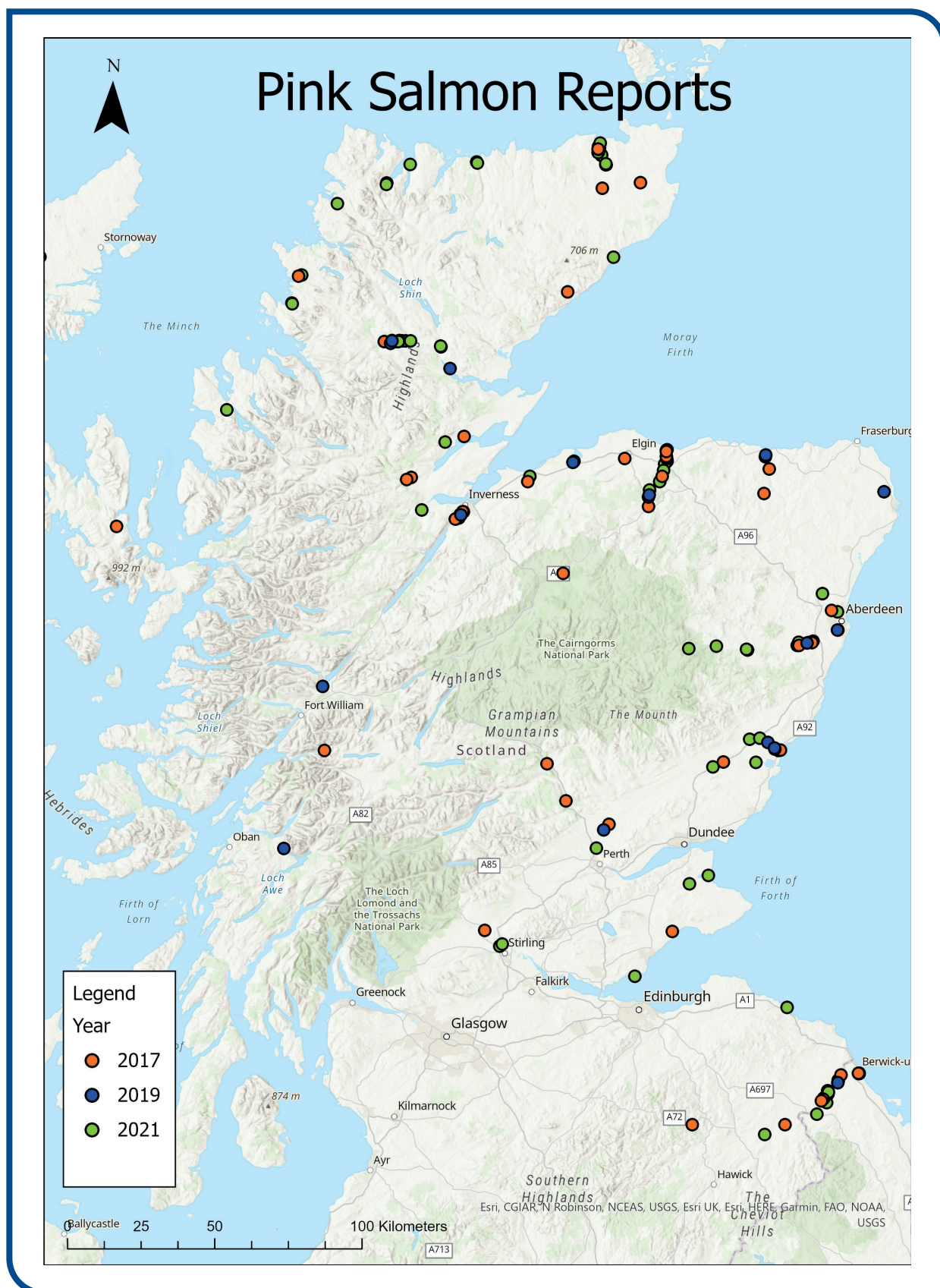
Sightings in Scottish waters

Pink salmon have been recorded in low numbers since 1960. Over the period 1960-2016 only 17 had been recorded. In 2017 a total of 139 pink salmon were recorded in Scotland and a number were captured and sampled. A joint opinion piece paper¹ was published by Marine

1 Armstrong JD, Bean CW, Wells A. The Scottish invasion of pink salmon in 2017. *J Fish Biol.* 2018; 93:8-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jfb.13680>

Scotland, NatureScot and Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) in March 2018.

Pink salmon have a two-year lifecycle and most have been recorded during odd numbered years in Scotland. In 2019, 20 fish were reported across Scotland and the highest ever recorded number were reported in 2021, with 169 pink salmon caught. We are closely monitoring this species to gain a clearer understanding of which rivers might be affected. Information on the presence of pink salmon gathered in 2023, will help to inform what actions may be appropriate in future years.



Map of Pink salmon report areas supplied by Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS)



Photo © Ness District Salmon Fishery Board

The Scottish Government works with FMS, NatureScot and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to co-ordinate monitoring, advice and actions to ensure that any recurrence of pink salmon in Scotland can be identified, reported and managed appropriately.

FMS have produced a detailed [Advice Note](#)² to help identify pink salmon and a [mobile app](#), which can be used to report incidences and view the findings in real time.

What does the law say?

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 pink salmon is defined

² <http://fms.scot/pink-salmon-in-scotland/>

as an invasive non-native species. Detailed provisions in the legislation are designed to help restrict the spread of invasive species and the Scottish Government has published a [Code of Practice on Non-Native Species](#)³.

Under terms of the 1981 Act it is an offence to fish for and retain pink salmon, or to have them under your control. The Code of Practice offers further advice on this at sections 2.20 to 2.24.

³ [Guidance on non-native species, approved by the Scottish Parliament. https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/)

Reporting pink salmon

If you see a pink salmon, or if you accidentally catch one while fishing for other species, we are looking for your help to gather as much information as possible.

- If you see a pink salmon, report it at <https://fms.scot/pink-salmon-in-scotland/>
- If you catch one, kill it humanely
- **Do not** return it alive or dead to the water
- Contact your District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) or Fisheries Trust who will advise on what to do next
- You will need to tell them:
 - ▶ the date that the fish was captured
 - ▶ the location where you saw or caught it, including a grid reference if possible
 - ▶ the method used to catch the fish e.g. rod & line
 - ▶ if known, the sex of the fish⁴
 - ▶ if relevant, the number of fish sighted/caught
- The DSFB or Trust may also ask you to freeze the carcass until collection can be arranged for further analysis and sampling

4 If it is an established fish, males will have a distinctive humped back and females are salmon shaped but olive green in colour.

Contact information

Report pink salmon sightings at <https://fms.scot/pink-salmon-in-scotland/>

Contact information for District Salmon Fishery Boards and Fisheries Trusts can be found on the Fisheries Management Scotland website at:

<https://fms.scot/about-us-2/our-members/>

<https://fms.scot/about-us-2/our-members/dsfb-trust-map/>