

Sparctic trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis* x *Salvelinus alpinus*) advisory note

Introduction

The purpose of this advice note is to ensure:

1. That all fishery stakeholders, including fishery managers and anglers, are alert to the recent captures of sparctic trout (or sparctic char) in the Tamar and Tavy catchment.
2. To ensure that fishery managers and anglers know what to do should sparctic trout be captured in England.



Figure 1. Sparctic trout captured in the Gunnislake fish trap, River Tamar.

Background

Sparctic trout are a hybrid of the native Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) and non-native Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*). In England, they are reared in aquaculture facilities and can be introduced to certain stillwaters for recreational fishing. It is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 to release trout hybrids that are not ordinarily resident in Great Britain into the wild. Under the Keeping and Introduction of Fish Regulations, 2015, it is an offence to introduce any trout, including trout hybrids into any water without an Environment Agency permit. The Environment Agency will not permit the introduction of trout hybrids into rivers, streams or drains.

We have received a number of reports of sparctic trout being captured within the Tamar and Tavy catchments. The source of these fish is not currently known, but we are investigating their distribution and the source of these fish.

What you should do if you see or capture a sparctic trout

If you have captured or found a sparctic trout, please contact the Environment Agency through the contact details provided at the end of this note. If you are confident you have captured a sparctic trout, with the fishery owner's permission, please do not return the fish to the river. Appendix 1 details some of the key features of sparctic trout to help you with identification.

In recording the capture of a sparcctic trout, please collect and report the following details:

- **date of capture or sighting,**
- **location of capture (grid reference if possible) and details of the site,**
- **fork length and weight,**
- **take a photograph of the fish.**

If you can confidently identify the fish as a sparcctic trout, and you have the fishery owner's permission to retain the fish, please also:

- **freeze and store the fish whole as soon as possible after capture,**
- **contact the Environment Agency, using the details below.**

Reporting of captured sparcctic trout by anglers

Please contact the Environment Agency's Bodmin Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology Team, who are co-ordinating reports from anglers

Contact details are:

Email SWBODMINFRB@environment-agency.gov.uk.

National Customer Contact Centre

You can also report any sparcctic trout captures via the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on **0800 807060**.

Annex 1: Identification sparctic trout

Distinctive colouration and markings along flanks, a combination of the spots seen on Arctic char and marbled patterns of the brook trout. Spots are orange and pink. Leading edges of fins are white/ cream and the tail fin is often heavily spotted. The underbelly is cream coloured.



Figure 2. Sparctic trout (bottom) and sea trout (top).