



What do wild salmon mean to me?

Andrew Flitcroft



Andrew Flitcroft is the Editor of Trout & Salmon, the UK's leading game-fishing magazine. He has fished for salmon in the UK, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and British Columbia. He is a keen trout angler too and a former England loch-style international. His favourite trout fishing is on Lough Corrib in Ireland.

I sometimes question why I fish for salmon, but rarely have a definitive answer. It is true that in any other walk of life something so fickle, frustrating and elusive would not hold my attention for long. The wild Atlantic salmon's many traits can make you doubt yourself and challenge the reasoning of all who fish for them. Those seeking instant gratification will not become salmon-anglers. In others, the fish's habits cause lifelong obsession and wanting. Those of us who stick at it through thick and thin do so because there isn't another fish that can compare. To fully accept this claim you must catch one. Only then will you know that it's true.

I've been hooked since landing my first fish, a Solway salmon, taken on a worm as a boy. To see that creature laid in my net brought tears to my eyes and caused shakes throughout my body. I not only felt that I'd graduated to a higher echelon, but, as its big eye stared back at me, I felt both sorry for putting it through an ordeal and privileged for making its acquaintance.

When I thought about what it had endured before ending up in my net, it gained my deep respect. If I am blessed enough to catch a salmon now, I still feel the same. If you respect the Atlantic salmon, you will make a salmon-fisher. Accept that you will succeed in catching them at times, but also that your failures will be many and that you will be the better for each experience.

To catch a salmon, many factors must align. Their presence, their mood and our timing are a constant lottery. Every now and again we catch one and think we've cracked it. But we know in our heart of hearts that this

success is rarely all our own making.

Fishing for such a complex creature can seem absurd, but that in itself makes it more challenging and utterly addictive. Long may the Atlantic salmon continue to touch anglers as it has touched me.



Discover more about the importance of wild Atlantic salmon at:
www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/
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