



# Fungus on salmon and sea trout

## Briefing note and advice to anglers

In recent years we have received a number of reports of wild salmon and sea trout with 'fungal infections' – classical symptoms showing white patches typically on the head and fins. We have also had reports of fish with the skin condition Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis (UDN), although confirmed cases of this disease remain very rare. These are both natural conditions that usually affect low numbers of salmon and sea trout every year as they return to our rivers. Numbers of affected fish can increase during certain conditions, such as periods of low flows, last spring we saw small numbers of affected fish in rivers across Wales, notably the Usk, Loughor, Dee and Nevern. We are monitoring the situation on all our major salmon rivers and working with partner organisations to progress our understanding of these diseases. Please get in touch on **03000 65 3000** if you see any dead or unhealthy fish in the wild.



Fungal patches on a wild Atlantic salmon

Fungal infections in salmon and sea trout are often confused or misreported as UDN. Fungal infections typically cause pale, cotton-wool like growths on the head, body or fins. These infections usually occur following damage or during periods of stress.

Salmon and Sea trout entering our rivers to spawn face many natural challenges and these infections are commonly seen from spring onwards. During heavy infections, large areas of the body may be covered. Badly affected fish become lethargic and may die as a result of the infection.

UDN is also a natural condition of wild salmon and sea trout, but its cause is still unknown. Fish with UDN usually develop smooth, rounded ulcers on the head. UDN has been recorded in Britain since the late 1800s, with outbreaks in the 1960s and 70s. Far fewer cases have been confirmed in recent years. It is a complex condition that can only be confirmed by laboratory examinations. Fish with UDN can recover and spawn successfully, but may also become infected with fungus which can mask a diagnosis.



A UDN-type lesion on the head of a salmon

The local teams are working closely with staff at the Environment Agency's National Fisheries Laboratory at Brampton to monitor these diseases and rule out other pathogens.

**Please contact us on 03000 65 3000 or [fisheries.wales@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:fisheries.wales@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk) if you see any affected or dying salmon or sea trout, photos would also be appreciated. This will help us to focus our monitoring efforts and assess the extent of any problems. Do not remove fish from the river and please return any affected fish you catch carefully to the water.**