

Extracts from 19th century newspapers relating to the Tweed salmon catch

In 1843, a writer in London recorded:

“The arrivals of salmon at Billingsgate average about 30 boxes per day in February and March, each box weighing about 1 cwt.; 50 boxes in April; from 80 to 100 in May; at the beginning of June from 200 to 300, and at the latter end of the month 500 boxes per day; which number gradually increases until it amounts during the end of July and the early part of August to 1000 boxes, and frequently more.”

TWEED SALMON NET FISHING – The produce has improved since last report, grilse now being the most plentiful. A salmon of 37 lbs has been got during the week. Salmon average 13lbs; grilse 5 lbs; and trout 5 lbs. Prices (today) Thursday were:- salmon 11d per lb; grilse 10d; and trout 10d, as compared with 1s 1d per lb for salmon; 10d for grilse; and 10d for trout on the corresponding date last year.

Berwick Journal
July 26th 1888

TWEED FISHING – The fishing on the Tweed has during the present and latter part of the former week improved immensely in its productiveness. The last rains, which produced a flood, have been the means of rendering the river more agreeable to the fish, and they have consequently in greater numbers ingressed from the sea. The fishing on Friday last week was declared to be the best which had been experienced for several years – we have heard it stated for so many as twenty. The boats as they arrived at the quay from the different stations, were so heavily laden as to bring the gunwales nearly even with the water. The Manchester steamer, which sailed on Saturday evening, had upwards of 250 boxes; and the Rapid, which left yesterday, had a similar number. The grilse are now in prime condition; but they have not as yet been caught in such numbers as is generally the case at this period – the present increase is principally in salmon and trout.

Berwick Advertiser
27th July 1839

THE SALMON FISHING - We have still to report favourably of this fishing. Up to and including Wednesday the fishing was excellent, the takes on that day were very satisfactory, the proportion of salmon being greatly on the increase. On Saturday 1300 fish were landed on the Quay; On Monday and Tuesday upwards of 1000. Yesterday the grilse were still numerous. A slight fresh in the water favoured the river fishings, and so long as it continues the fishing is likely to be good.

Berwick Advertiser
30th July 1853

TWEED FISHINGS – The fishings on the Tweed have been anything but productive this week, considering the season of the year; the takes at all the company's stations have not been average ones. On Monday morning the takes at Goswick and Cheswick were better than they had been for some days previous – the former having 147 grilse and 28 salmon, the latter being something less. Prices still keep high – salmon being from 1s to 1s 3d, grilse from 11½d to 1s 1d, trout from 8½d to 9½d per lb.

Berwick Journal
23rd August 1856

SALMON FISHINGS - It is somewhat singular that rain, which was so much desired by the fishermen during the summer months to flood the river and to allow the fish a free run to the higher districts, should only have fallen in sufficient quantities on the last week of the fishing season, and more heavily on the last day (Wednesday), causing a flood on the first day of the close time, which would have been of great value to the lessees of fisheries at an earlier period. All the fishing boats and nets have again been removed from the river and have been stored to await the re-opening of the fishing season in February.

Berwick Advertiser
17th September, 1864

CLOSE OF THE TWEED NET FISHING -

The salmon net fishing closed for the season on Monday last. In the early months, salmon were more plentiful than for some years past, but from the end of May till the close of the season, during which period the river was remarkably small from the long continuance of dry weather, salmon did not enter the river freely, and the "takes" were very small indeed. Grilse were also very scarce, and the summer fishing was thus entirely unremunerative to the great majority of the fisheries, especially to those above the mouth of the river. The total number of grilse is many thousands below that of last year, and this is the most unproductive season on record. Owing to the scarcity of salmon and grilse the prices were high throughout the summer, and during the other months they were about the usual average.

Berwick Journal,
18th September 1868

TWEED FISHINGS – Although for several months after the opening the fishings were unfavourable, the season which closed on Wednesday has been upon the whole a good one. Fully a larger number of salmon has been caught this year than last; the takes of trout have been also more numerous; and of grilse at least three times the quantity has been taken. This result has been brought about by the prosperity of the fishings within the last three months. Prices have been usually high. Average prices for salmon and grilse from 1s to 1s 9d; and for trout 9d. It has been remarked that a very small number of foul fish has been caught at the close of the season.

Berwick Journal
18th October 1856