SHOAL AND OPEN-WATER FISH

Herring

Clupea harengus Also known as Atlantic herring

Caught off the Sussex coast | Confirmed record



Herring (*Clupea harengus*). Picture: savoieju, CC BY 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clupea_harengus_Atlantic.jpg.

IN SHORT

Herring is one of the great fish of British waters, though not one that most anglers set out to catch. The British boat record herring was caught off Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, in 1973. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Silvery, torpedo-shaped shoal fish with a blue-green back, large easily-shed scales and a smooth belly with no sharp keel.

SIZE
Up to about 45 cm and 1.1 kg (Wikipedia). The BRFC boat record fish weighed 1 lb 1 oz.

HABITAT
Large open-water shoals in the North Sea, English Channel, Irish Sea and Celtic Sea (Wikipedia).

OFF SUSSEX
Sussex IFCA says herring are taken in the district only commercially, between October and December.

AROUND BRITAIN
Southern Bight (Downs) herring spawn from November to January (Wikipedia). No month-by-month angling calendar was found.

METHODS
Not given in our sources

GROUP
Shoal and open-water fish

COME FISHING WITH US

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- **Herring on the 90-minute mackerel trip** (tuition included, keep what you catch; 90 minutes, £27 per person or £250 whole boat)

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About the herring

Herring is one of the great fish of British waters, though not one that most anglers set out to catch. It is silvery and torpedo-shaped, with a blue-green back, large scales that come off easily and a smooth belly with no sharp keel. It grows to about 45 cm and 1.1 kg. Herring live in large open-water shoals in the North Sea, English Channel, Irish Sea and Celtic Sea. The Southern Bight herring, the ones of the Downs, spawn from November to January. We found no month-by-month angling calendar, so we have not offered one. Sussex IFCA says herring are taken in the district only commercially, between October and December. Herring are an important bait fish for anglers. The species also has a small place in Sussex angling history, because the British boat record herring came off Bexhill-on-Sea in 1973, caught by a 13-year-old. It was a small fish by weight, just over a pound, but it still stands on the official list. Kestrel Warrior also lists herring among the fish caught on its mackerel trips.

On the boat

We found no specific angling method for herring in our sources, so we do not give one. Sussex IFCA says herring are taken in the district only commercially, between October and December. Kestrel Warrior lists herring among the fish caught on its mackerel trips. Herring are described as an important bait fish for anglers.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	1 lb 1 oz (0.481 kg)
Where	off Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex
When	1973
Angler	B. Barden (aged 13)

Confirmed British boat-caught record: B. Barden (aged 13), 1 lb 1 oz (0.481 kg), off Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, in 1973. This is a historical weight record from the official British Record Fish Committee list. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and new claims are by length only, with a qualifying length of 32 cm.

Care and rules

The minimum landing size is 20 cm, according to the Gov.uk table checked in 2026. The IUCN lists herring as Least Concern. Herring are an important bait fish for anglers. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The British boat record herring was caught off Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, in 1973 by a 13-year-old angler, and the fish weighed 1 lb 1 oz.

Sources: Wikipedia: Atlantic herring; Sussex IFCA species; Kestrel Warrior mackerel trip; Gov.uk MCRS in UK waters; BRFC sea fish listings June 2026. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/herring/