

## **Canoeing on the Barle**

**The Barle offers fantastic opportunities for canoeing in pristine scenery and is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its important wildlife that includes salmon, otters, kingfisher, dipper and rare plants.**

**In order to manage the shared use of this river and to minimise any potential risk to the special wildlife that relies upon it, a trial access arrangement is now in place. The Barle is largely in private ownership and this arrangement has come about through a great deal of negotiation, so please help us to make it work.**

**This arrangement only allows for canoeing downstream of Tarr Steps during the canoe season and when water levels are high enough. The frequency of salmon egg laying sites and juvenile and spawning fish increases dramatically above Tarr Steps and the water level here is rarely deep enough for enjoyable paddling.**

**The Canoe season is open from the 15th October to 31st March. This date restriction aims to reduce any potential impact on breeding birds and mammals and also to reduce possible conflict with angling on this narrow and shallow river.**

**The water level restriction will reduce any potential threat to fish eggs in the river bed and will ensure an enjoyable days canoeing with minimum scrapes. The water level is indicated by a gauge on the Barle Bridge at Dulverton which can be viewed from this web link.**

**[www.farsondigitalwatercams.com/live-webcams/south/Exe/Dulverton](http://www.farsondigitalwatercams.com/live-webcams/south/Exe/Dulverton)**

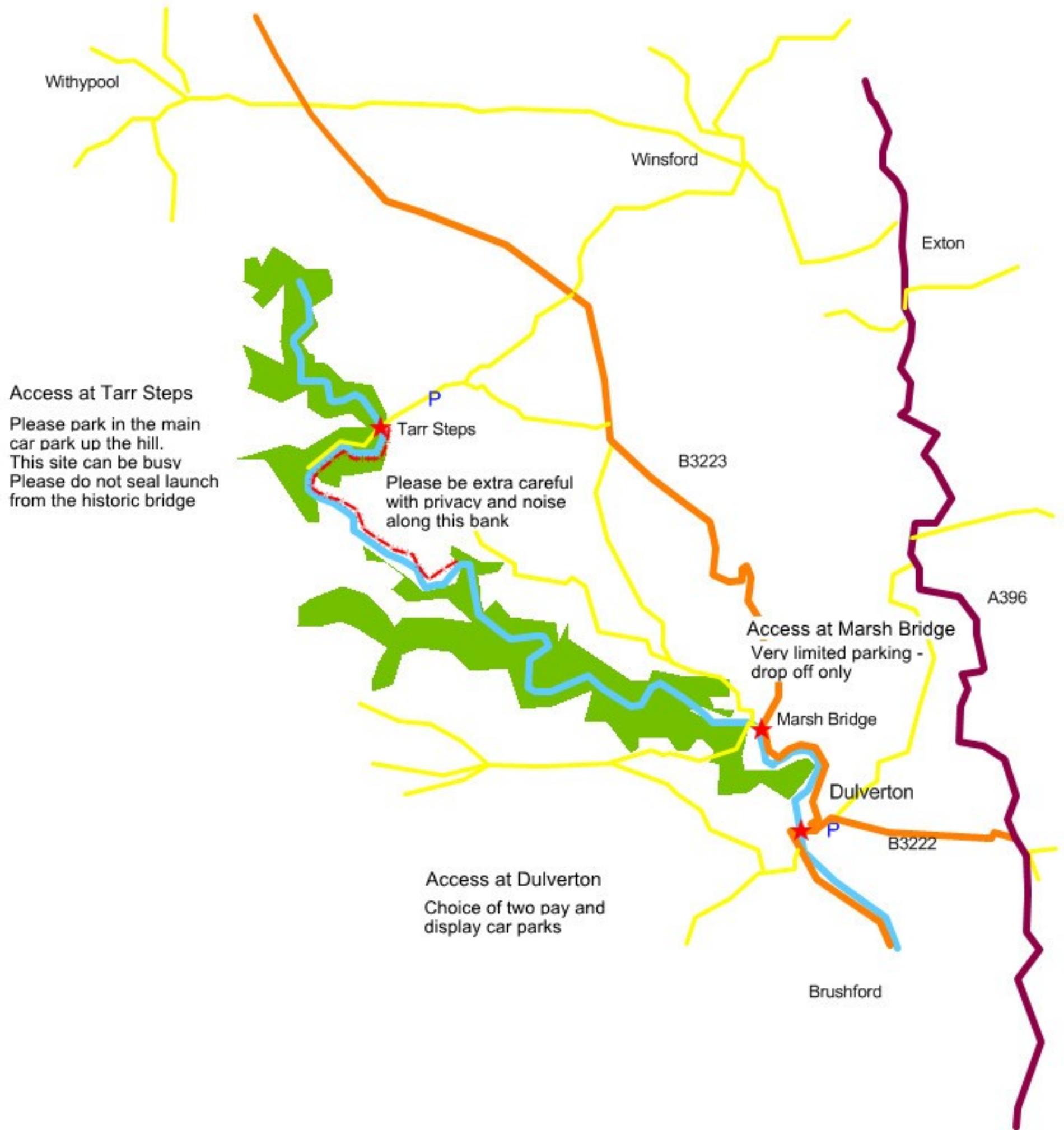
**Canoeing is allowed when the water level is above the red marker and into the green zone. This minimum level is equivalent to 50cm at the Brushford Gauging Station which can be viewed at The Environment Agency website.**

**To address privacy issues and to further reduce any potential threat to wildlife a paddle limit of 30 people per day is also in place. Booking ahead is Essential but is completely free and is being managed by Exmoor National Park Authority.**

**Please view the national park Canoe the Barle webpage for latest booking information or contact the Dulverton National Park Centre**

**Tel : 01398 323841 or E-mail: [NPCDulverton@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](mailto:NPCDulverton@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)**

**The map below shows access points and other information for the Barle canoe access arrangement**

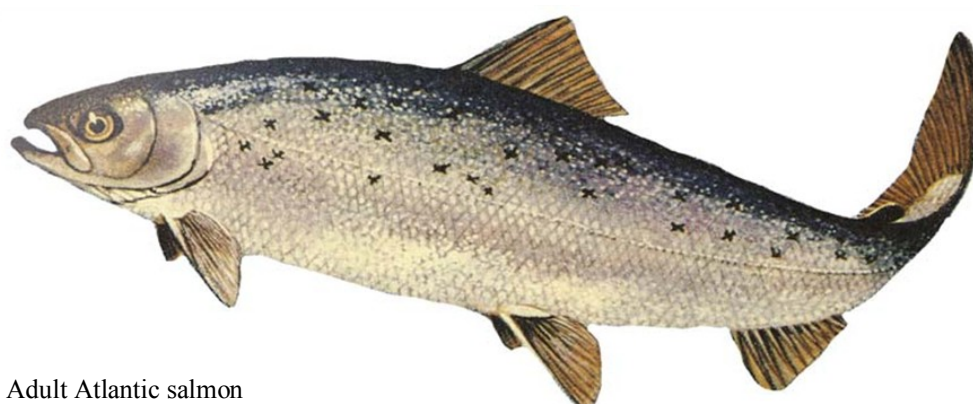


## Special Wildlife on the Barle

### Salmon

The Atlantic Salmon has a fascinating life cycle and has suffered severe decline in recent decades. It is one of many fish species that inhabit the Barle but it is of particular concern to conservationists and anglers.

Salmon eggs are laid in scrapes in the gravel of the river bed and are vulnerable to disturbance and sediment so canoeists can help to protect this fish by minimising bank erosion and being particularly careful to avoid disturbance of the river bed. Eggs can be found in any gravels with good water flow from November through to March and are not normally easily visible.



Adult Atlantic salmon



In late autumn the wild Atlantic salmon spawn. The female selects a site which is often at the tail end of a large pool. It is important that the water is flowing steadily through clean loose gravel. This ensures a free flow of oxygen-rich water through the stones essential for the salmon eggs to develop. She digs a 10 to 30 cm deep nest called a redd in the gravel with her tail. The female releases her eggs with the male alongside her. Then the male releases his milt (sperm) to fertilise the eggs into the redd. The female then covers the eggs with gravel. In some cases the sexually mature male parr manage to fertilize some of the eggs. The female may lay 1,500 eggs or more for each kg of body weight.



Pea sized orange eggs are deposited in riverbed gravel in autumn, and hatch the following early spring. As the eggs develop, the eyes of the developing wild salmon can be seen through the semi-transparent membrane.



The partly transparent alevin hatch and remain hidden in the riverbed gravels, feeding from the attached yolk sac. They emerge from the redd about 4 to 6 weeks after hatching. They are about 2cm in length. They now have all eight fins, which will be used to maintain their position in the fast flowing streams and manoeuvre about in the water.

## River Jelly Lichen

This aquatic lichen grows on submerged rocks in partial shade in fast-flowing intermediate and upland streams. It is rare in the UK and has been declining since 1960. Its distribution also extends into northern Europe and Russia. It is listed as vulnerable on both the IUCN/WCMC and GB Red Lists, and is protected under Schedule 8 of the WCA 1981. Current factors causing loss or decline are thought to include nutrient enrichment of rivers, increased silt loads of rivers, water acidification and reduced water levels (UK National Archives)



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Gray, British Lichen Society ©