

Twaite Shad

Alosa fallax

Fish · Runs the Solway rivers in late spring



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A deep-bodied, strongly compressed silver fish with a blue-green back, a deeply forked tail and a row of dark spots along the flank behind the gill cover — usually several, which helps separate it from the allis shad. Twaite shad enter the Solway rivers in late spring to spawn. They are far scarcer than they were and are a protected species across their range.

BEHAVIOUR

Shad spawn at night in the tidal and lower reaches, and the spawning itself is audible from the bank — groups of fish thrashing at the surface in the dark. Unlike salmon, some survive to spawn again in later years. At sea they feed on plankton and small fish, sieving with fine gill rakers. Weirs that block access to historic spawning reaches are one of the main reasons for their decline.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Herrings and shads (Clupeidae)
SIZE	Typically 30–45 cm
UK STATUS	Protected; scarce and declining

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