

Angler gets penalty that could have bought 19 rod licences

The 25-year-old pleaded guilty of fishing without a licence on 15 April 2022 at Pride Lakes in Hemington, Leicestershire.

The case was brought by the Environment Agency to Northampton Magistrates Court on Monday 24 October.

Sims also pleaded guilty of leaving his fishing rod unattended with bait or hook in the water at the same location on the same date.

He was ordered to pay a total penalty of £575, including a fine of £400, costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £40. An annual fishing licence currently costs just £30.

Following the verdict, Lee Watts, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the East Midlands, said:

We're pleased how seriously the courts take these offences. Ryan Sims has been rightly punished for fishing without a licence, and for leaving his fishing rod in the water unattended, which meant he was unable to exercise sufficient control over it.

We hope the case acts as a reminder to anglers of the importance of having a rod licence before they go fishing and deters them from fishing illegally.

All of the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries for the benefit of anglers. For those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence. As well as cheating other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty. Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

Income from rod licence sales is used to fund [Environment Agency](#) work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence to fish. A 1-day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence currently costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 – 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 807060 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Background

Ryan Sims was charged with the following offences:

On 15 April 2022 at Pride Lakes, Hemington Leicestershire, in a place where fishing is regulated for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

On 15 April 2022 at Pride Lakes, Hemington, left a rod and line with its bait or hook in the water unattended or so that the person shall be unable at any time to take or exercise sufficient control over said rod and line. Contrary to Byelaw 10 of the Environment Agency National Byelaws which came in to force on 27 May 2001 made pursuant to Section 210 and Schedule 25 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and Contrary to Section 211 of the said Act.