

Press release: Warning for anglers after illegal cast net seized

Anyone caught fishing with an illegal cast net in North East waters will be prosecuted, the Environment Agency has warned.

The warning follows the seizure of a cast net from an angler caught using it to catch salmon on the River Wear at Durham. The seizure was a first for the area and Environment Officers want it to stay that way.

Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist Kevin Summerson is leading the investigation against the angler. He said:

Even though these nets can be purchased from a number of UK outlets it is illegal to use them in North East rivers. Anyone caught and prosecuted could face a hefty fine and even a custodial sentence.

We take illegal fishing very seriously. Whether anglers use illegal equipment or fish without a licence, it's not fair on other anglers and endangers the future of the sport.

"Our work is intelligence led and we work closely with our partners at the police and Angling Trust to target known hot spots and where illegal fishing is reported to us.

We carry out enforcement work all year round and will be continuing throughout the coming weeks, including the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends. I'd urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting any suspected illegal activity to us.

It is illegal to use cast nets to catch freshwater fish, eels, trout, migratory trout or salmon in the North East. They are also illegal if used to catch migratory trout, salmon or freshwater eels up to six nautical miles from the coast line.

The maximum penalty for this offence if convicted before a magistrate is an unlimited fine and/or three months in custody, or an unlimited fine and/or up to two years in custody before the crown court.

The Environment Agency works 24 hours a day to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents and we encourage people to report such incidents to our Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

Press release: Drivers advised to plan journeys ahead of M48 Severn Bridge half-marathon closure

Up to 2,300 runners are expected to take part in the fourth running of the half-marathon, which starts on the western (Chepstow) end of the Severn Bridge, on the motorway itself, and finishes, after crossing the bridge and back, below junction 2 of the M48.

The half-marathon will start at 9am and the 10k event, new for this year, will start at 9.45am.

On the day, the bridge will be fully closed to traffic between 7.30am and 11.30am, with a clearly signed diversion route in place during the duration of the closure. The eastbound footpath and cycle track will also be closed between 9am and 3pm.

Gareth Price, south west emergency planning officer for Highways England, said: "We'd like to remind road users to plan ahead – more than 2,000 people are expected to take part, and as well as the bridge closure, local roads are also expected to be busy before and after the race.

"Our advice is to check our traffic and travel information channels, set off early and allow plenty of time." Drivers can get up-to-the-minute travel information by phoning the Highways England Information Line on 0300 123 5000 or by accessing the [Traffic England website](#).

Further information regarding current and planned roadworks in the South West region plus neighbouring regions can be found on the [Highways England website](#).

More details on the Severn Bridge half-marathon and 10k can be [found on their website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Environment Agency tests flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes

The Environment Agency is conducting its annual test of the flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes on Friday 25 August.

Installed in 2007, the 18 sirens help warn over 25,000 households and local businesses of imminent tidal flooding. The siren on the Willows Estate in Grimsby is used to warn residents about flooding from the New Cut Drain and the River Freshney, while the others warn of flooding from the Humber.

Testing will take place on Friday 25 August between 10am and 12pm. If you hear the sirens during this time, you do not need to take any action. If flooding is expected on the day, the test will be rescheduled and flood warnings will be issued through the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning System.

Environment Agency staff will be present together with representatives from North East Lincolnshire council at Freshney Place shopping centre in Grimsby between 9am and 5pm on 25 August. They'll be able to answer questions about the sirens and provide information about your own flood risk, including what steps you can take to prepare for an emergency.

The sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes are a secondary flood warning tool to the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service, which provides targeted flooding warnings via phone call or text to mobile landlines or through email.

Luke Dawson, Flood Resilience team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

The flood sirens we own and operate in Grimsby and Cleethorpes help us warn over 25,000 households and local businesses. It's important that we conduct these annual tests to make sure the sirens will work during an emergency.

We'd like to remind people in the area that our free Flood Warning System provides as much notice as possible ahead of a potential flooding incident. While the sirens are a vital secondary flood warning tool, we encourage everyone to check their flood risk and sign up for flood warnings. You can sign up for our free, targeted flood warnings by calling 0345 988 1188 or by visiting www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings.

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding to thousands of homes and businesses in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, but we cannot remove the risk of flooding entirely. This is why it is important that everyone plays their part to protect themselves from the risk of flooding. If you are in the area on 25 August, please do come along to Freshney Place to learn more about flood risk and how you can protect yourself and your property.

Cllr David Watson, portfolio holder for environment and energy at North East Lincolnshire Council, said:

On the flood siren testing day, North East Lincolnshire Council staff and its partner Engie will be joining the Environment Agency in Freshney Place Shopping Centre between 9am and 5pm. Officers will be available to answer any questions on flood risk and how you can prepare.

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[News story: Position papers published](#)

ahead of third round of negotiations

The position papers outlining the UK's negotiating approach to goods on the market and to confidentiality and access to official documents have been published today ahead of the third round of negotiations.

The documents make the case for why it is in the interests of both the EU and the UK that our exit is as smooth and orderly as possible for UK and European businesses and consumers.

The EU exports goods worth €314 billion (around £257 billion) to the UK, more than to Brazil, Russia, India and China combined, which is why it is in no-one's interest to see disruption and uncertainty.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis said:

These papers will help give businesses and consumers certainty and confidence in the UK's status as an economic powerhouse after we have left the EU.

They also show that as we enter the third round of negotiations, it is clear that our separation from the EU and future relationship are inextricably linked.

We have already begun to set out what we would like to see from a future relationship on issues such as customs and are ready to begin a formal dialogue on this and other issues.

The UK has been clear that exporters and businesses need to be able to plan ahead with certainty which is why we want to seek an agreement with the EU which allows the freest and most frictionless trade possible in goods and services.

The UK enters these discussions with this in mind, and the proposals set out in this paper are designed to ensure the millions of consumers and businesses across Europe have the certainty they have asked for.

The papers lay out the following UK positions:

Goods on the market

Our ambition is to seek an agreement with the EU which allows the freest and most frictionless trade possible in goods and services, to the benefit of all. The paper outlines four key principles for ensuring a smooth and orderly withdrawal from the EU in regard to the availability of goods.

- Firstly, we want to ensure that goods which are placed on the market before exit day can continue to be sold in the UK and EU, without any additional requirements or restrictions.

- Secondly, we want to avoid unnecessary duplication of compliance activities that have been undertaken by businesses prior to exit. This means that where products have gone through an authorisation process prior to exit, for example a type approval for a car, this approval should remain valid in both markets after exit.
- Thirdly, we are clear that patient safety and consumer protection in the EU27 and UK are paramount, which means that any agreement will need to facilitate the continued oversight of products to ensure the necessary action can be taken for non-compliant or unsafe goods.
- Finally, the provision of goods and services is increasingly interconnected. Services are essential for production of goods, for their sale, distribution and delivery, and for their operation and repair. Where goods are supplied with services, we believe there should be no restriction to the provision of these services.

These four principles demonstrate that the UK is getting on with the job of negotiating. Taken together, they would prevent bureaucracy and unnecessary duplication of effort by business, or restricted supply of certain products to consumers, which might otherwise occur. But our position remains that the best way to address these risks is through discussions on a deep and special future partnership which enables our close trading relationship to continue to flourish.

The link to this paper can be found [here](#).

Confidentiality and access to documents

This paper shows that we are getting on with negotiations by directly responding to the EU's paper on "Issues relating to the Functioning of the Union Institutions, Agencies and Bodies."

As the UK leaves the EU, it will be important to establish a framework for the continued respect of obligations of confidentiality and the protection of official documents exchanged while it was a Member State. The UK considers that any agreement on confidentiality and access to official documents produced or exchanged while the UK was a Member State should be reciprocal, affording an equivalent level of protection to the UK and the EU after the UK's withdrawal. The necessary protections concerning both UK and EU data should be on equivalent terms to those laid out in existing regimes.

The link to this paper can be found [here](#).