

Press release: North East man fined for illegal fishing

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers of the importance of having a rod licence after a County Durham man was fined for fishing illegally.

Dean Ferguson, 49, of Browning Hill, Coxhoe, failed to appear for his court hearing at Peterlee Magistrates' Court on Monday, 23 January.

In his absence he was fined £660, ordered to pay £127 costs and a victim surcharge of £66.

Intelligence-led patrols

Shortly before midnight on the night of Saturday 6 August 2016, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were carrying out intelligence-led patrols on the River Wear in Durham city.

They saw Ferguson start fishing in the river using a double-handed salmon rod, and almost immediately he had foul-hooked a sea trout, which means the fish was hooked somewhere other than in the mouth.

He was stopped by the officers who searched his vehicle, and found the foul-hooked fish. Ferguson also admitted he did not have a valid rod licence.

He was summonsed to appear at court for the offences. It's illegal to fish without a licence, and to fail to return to the water any fish that is foul-hooked.

'Vital' that anglers abide by law

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Technical Specialist for the North East, said:

It's vital that anglers abide by the law to protect the future of the sport and the quality of our rivers and fisheries.

We won't hesitate to take action to stop illegal fishing and hopefully this will act as a deterrent for any angler thinking of cheating the system.

All the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefiting anglers.

Rod licence income funds improvements

During 2016 in the North East there were six serious fisheries offences resulting in £460 in fines and £600 costs, plus forfeiture of equipment and a crushed vehicle.

There were a further 54 offenders prosecuted for 59 rod licence offences resulting in fines of £14,327, with four offenders also given conditional discharges.

Anyone discovered committing offences could face a substantial fine at court.

All 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.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – you can buy them online at the [Post Office](#).

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

[The number of people forced to sleep rough on our streets is spiralling – John Healey](#)

John Healey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, commenting on the latest rough sleeping statistics released today, said:

“It is a national scandal that in England in the 21st century the number of people forced to sleep rough on our streets is spiralling upwards – and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

“These figures are a terrible reminder of the consequences of Conservative Ministers’ seven years of failure on housing.

“The number of people sleeping rough fell under Labour but has more than doubled since 2010, and has risen every year under the Conservatives.

“This is a direct result of decisions made by Conservative Ministers: a steep drop in investment for affordable homes, crude cuts to housing benefit, reduced funding for homelessness services, and a refusal to help private renters.

“Ministers’ long-promised housing white paper will fall at the first hurdle if it does not set out how they will end the national shame of rough sleeping, as Labour has committed to do.”

China's population to reach 1.45 bln around 2030

China's population is expected to peak at about 1.45 billion around 2030, according to the national population development plan for 2016-2030 released by the State Council, China's cabinet, Wednesday.

The country will enter a key transitional period between 2021 and 2030 in its population development as it will witness a decrease in the number of people of working age, more elderly people, still active population migration and diversified family patterns, according to the plan, which was signed and approved by Premier Li Keqiang.

"China's basic national condition of a large population will not fundamentally change. The population pressure on economic and social development will not fundamentally change. The tensions between population and resources and environment will not fundamentally change," the plan said.

The country will adhere to the family planning policy as a basic state policy, and fully implement the two-child policy to promote balanced population development, according to the plan.

The government will improve the policy adjustment mechanism for child birth, allocate public service resources rationally, improve development and support systems for families to achieve a suitable fertility rate, it said.

Efforts will also be made to improve the skill set of new workers, make full use of workers' potentials, develop the human resources of the senior population, and make good use of international talent.

Measures will be taken to promote urbanization, improve policies on population movement, address the problem of an aging population, promote women's development, and enhance protection of minors and the disabled.

As of 2015, China's population was 1.375 billion.

China allowed all married couples to have two children in 2016. This follows an earlier easing of the policy in 2013 that allowed couples to have a second child if either parent was an only child.

The latest change ended the one-child policy that was implemented in the late 1970s to rein in the surging population.

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[This is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister – Keir Starmer](#)

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, commenting on

the Government's announcement that they will publish a White Paper, said:

"This is a significant and welcome U-turn from the Prime Minister.

"Labour has repeatedly called for the Government to publish a plan for Brexit before Article 50 is triggered and we made clear Labour would table amendments on this to the Article 50 Bill.

"This U-turn comes just 24 hours after David Davis seemed to rule out a White Paper, and failed to answer repeated questions from MPs on all sides of the House.

"The Prime Minister now needs to confirm that this White Paper will be published in time to inform the Article 50 process, and that it will clear up the inconsistencies, gaps and risks outlined in her speech."