

Birmingham anglers catch a whopping pair of fines

The cases were brought by the Environment Agency to Northampton Magistrates Court on Monday 24 October.

Kevin Mallard from Rowley Regis was found guilty of fishing without a licence on 25 May 2022 at Lodge Farm Reservoir at Netherton, near Dudley.

In a separate case Aaron Butler from Smethwick was found guilty of leaving his fishing rod unattended with bait or hook in the water at Highley on the River Severn in Shropshire on 28 June 2022.

Kevin Mallard, 35, was proved guilty in absence and ordered to pay a total penalty of £619. The penalty includes a fine of £440, costs of £135, and a victim surcharge of £44.

Aaron Butler, 35, was also proved guilty in absence and ordered to pay a total penalty of £443. The penalty includes a fine of £220, costs of £135, and a victim surcharge of £88.

Nichola Tomlinson, Fisheries Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

We're pleased to see how seriously the courts take these offences. Kevin Mallard and Aaron Butler have both been rightly punished for fishing illegally on separate occasions. While Aaron Butler had a licence to fish, leaving his fishing rod in the water unattended meant he was unable to exercise sufficient control over it.

Illegal fishing undermines the Environment Agency's efforts to protect fish stocks and make fishing sustainable. Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries for the benefit of anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

We hope these penalties will act as a deterrent to anyone who is thinking of breaking the laws and byelaws we have in place across England.

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

Kevin Mallard was charged with the following offence:

At 2:12pm on 25 May 2022 at Netherton Reservoir (known as Lodge Farm Reservoir, Netherton) in a place where fishing is regulated, fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Aaron Butler was charged with the following offence:

On 28 June 2022 at Highley on the River Severn, 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.