

Close season for coarse fishing gets underway for 2022

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers that the close season for coarse fishing comes into effect today (Tuesday 15 March) and runs until 15 June inclusive. The annual close season prevents fishing for coarse fish in rivers and streams across England, helping to protect fish when they are spawning and supporting vulnerable stocks.

Throughout the close season, Environment Agency (EA) officers conduct patrols to ensure anglers respect the no fishing period. Notices have been displayed in key fishing areas across England reminding anglers of the law. As part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, Angling Trust (AT) volunteers support the EA by keeping watch on riverbanks and reporting incidents to the 24-hour incident hotline 0800 80 70 60.

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of Operation CLAMPDOWN and this year it will be officially launched on the River Tone in Taunton, Somerset. Environment Agency officers will support the launch by also undertaking a week of action from Tuesday 15th March to Sunday 20th March. Patrols will continue for the duration of the close season.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency, said:

Every year, between March and June, our rivers start to reawaken, and our coarse fish populations will soon begin spawning. The close season aims to protect fish during this delicate time to ensure they remain healthy and resilient. Alongside our fisheries improvement work, the close season gives our fish populations the chance to recover.

Going fishing is a great way to connect with nature, relax and unwind – and we always encourage new anglers to give fishing a go. However, we are aware that not all new anglers will have knowledge of fishing rules like the close season. If you know a new angler, please remind them of the close season dates.

Anglers who do still want to get out on the banks during close season can still visit many stillwaters and canals, depending on landowner agreement, or try their hand at trout fishing, though a valid fishing licence is still required.

Nino Brancato, Angling Trust National Enforcement Support Manager, said:

After ten years the positive impact of the work of the Voluntary Bailiff Service cannot be underestimated in supporting fisheries

enforcement across England. A key part of this has been our work on Operation CLAMPDOWN.

This year's close season will offer another great opportunity for the Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and the Voluntary Bailiff Service to work closely with the Environment Agency and police during Operation CLAMPDOWN 10.

Our dedicated volunteer bailiffs will be out on patrol and taking part in coordinated joint activity around the nation's waterways in an eyes and ears capacity – gathering intelligence and reporting incidents in support of our enforcement partners as part of our multi-agency approach to protecting fish and fisheries.

The coarse fish close season applies to rivers, streams, drains and some canals, as well as certain stillwaters within specified 'sites of special scientific interest' (SSSI). The canals and SSSI stillwaters covered by the statutory close season can be found on the [national rod fishing byelaw guidance page on gov.uk](#)

The Environment Agency takes illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally should expect to be prosecuted and to face a substantial fine. Those who suspect illegal fishing should report it to the Environment Agency's incident hotline 0800 80 70 60

Further information

- To help tackle unlicensed and illegal fishing, the Environment Agency urges anyone to report incidents by calling the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information can also be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111
- The coarse fish close season runs from 15 March until 15 June inclusive on rivers, streams, drains, some canals and specified SSSI stillwaters.
- Coarse fishing is still allowed on most stillwaters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement. You can find out which stillwaters and canals still have a statutory close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area on Gov.uk.
- Enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally. Annual fishing licences are available from only £30. It's easy to buy online. We have created a new way to view your fishing licence. You can now get your licence digitally, as an email or a text message, or you can continue to get your licence card in the post. Find out more on our [fishing licence information page on gov.uk](#)
- The Environment Agency works closely with the Angling Trust as part of the Building Bridges Project to educate and integrate migrant anglers, supporting them to fish legally in local communities. You can find out more on the [Angling Trust's website](#).
- Fishing licence income is used to fund work to maintain, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. This includes improving fish passage, river habitat improvements and fish rescues, as well as activities to promote angling

- You can learn more about how the licence fee income is used in [EA's Annual Fisheries Report](#)
- Visit the [get fishing website](#) to find out about angling events, fisheries and venues