

Environment Agency delivers warning to illegal anglers with new enforcement campaign

Press release

A month-long enforcement campaign will crack down on illegal fishing and build on efforts to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour on river banks.



The Environment Agency has launched a month-long enforcement campaign to crack down on illegal fishing and build on efforts to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour on river banks.

A warning has been issued to illegal anglers as the Environment Agency undertakes a month of patrols to target poachers and those fishing without a licence.

Operation LUNGFISH is underway to protect fisheries from harmful activity including theft and fishing with illegal traps. Enforcement officers from the Environment Agency can be joined by the Angling Trust, Voluntary Bailiffs and local police officers to conduct patrols around rivers, lakes and ponds.

Launched on 23rd July, Operation LUNGFISH has carried out a range of action around the country in its first two weeks:

- In the West Midlands illegal crayfish traps have been seized.
- In the South East an EA patrol team were joined by the Sussex Rural Police crime team and the Voluntary Bailiff Service (VBS) to conduct an enforcement blitz, as they visited over 40 venues to check 650 licences and issued 64 offence reports
- In the North East 214 licences were checked, 21 anglers reported for fishing offences – with another five people reported for offences across Durham, Northumberland, Washington and South Tyneside
- Patrols in Lincolnshire, conducted with the East Midlands Wildlife Crime Group and The Angling Trust, checked 118 licences with sixteen notices

being served for fishing offences

Heidi Stone, Environment Agency Fisheries Partnerships Manager:

We encourage everyone to give fishing a go this summer and throughout this month, existing fishing licence holders can take a friend fishing by applying for a free day licence.

As law abiding anglers know, illegal fishing and anti-social behaviour on our banks is not only harmful to fish populations, but can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and surrounding wildlife.

We are working closely with our partners on Operation LUNGFISH to ensure that fishing licence income is used to protect fisheries and make angling a great experience for all.

Operation LUNGFISH runs alongside two key activities in the angling calendar, [National Fishing Month](#) (24th July to 30th August) and [Take a Friend Fishing 2021](#) (25th July to 5th September). These events encourage people to visit the riverbank and give fishing a go, with the month of action targeting those abusing the rules that protect England's fisheries.

To purchase or re-new your fishing licence please visit: [Buy a rod fishing licence – GOV.UK](#)

Published 18 August 2021