

# Press release: Water abstraction lie costs farm business £5,500

Lakenheath farming business N&M Sizer lied about how much water it abstracted, fearing it would lose its licence or have its abstraction limits reduced.

In doing so, the company falsely stated that it had extracted more water than it was allowed to under the licence which resulted in an investigation by the Environment Agency.

The company had actually taken very little of the allowance as its crops at the time did not need spray irrigation, Ipswich Magistrates' Court heard today (30 May).

It fined the company £3,000 for the deception and ordered it to pay £2,531 costs.

Mrs Megan Selves, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court the company had been worried that as it had not taken much water it would lose the right the following year to take what the licence allowed.

However, she said that any reduction in future abstraction or any revocation of licence would not be done without looking at about 10 years of records and without discussion with the licence holder.

Any assessment would only be carried out when the licence came up for renewal or if there was evidence that the licence is causing environmental damage. The licence for N&M Sizer Ltd expires on 31 March 2027.

Mrs Selves said that water meters at the company's site, Bedford Fen in Sedgfen, had been re-calibrated to corroborate the figures submitted to the Environment Agency in a 'determined effort to mislead'.

She said the company's actions had been deliberate and a 'flagrant disregard for the law' and although there had been no environmental impact, the company had falsified its figures giving a false impression of how much water had been taken from the environment.

Mrs Selves said the company had shown remorse and co-operated with the investigation.

N&M Sizer Ltd pleaded guilty to:

Charge: On or before 30 November 2015 you furnished information to the Environment Agency pursuant to section 201 of the Water Resources Act 1991, namely the water abstraction return for 2014 to 2015 for licence 6/33/39/\*S/0496/R01 for abstraction points A, C, D, E and F, and in the said information made a statement which you knew to be false or misleading in a material particular, namely that you had abstracted 153,360 cubic metres of

water.

Contrary to section 206(1) and (5) of the Water Resources Act 1991

Media enquiries: For East Anglia press office please contact (24 hours): 0800 917 9250

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## **Press release: Environment Agency saves thousands of fish in Ampthill Reservoir**

Over the hot weekend of 17 to 18 June, Environment Agency teams saved thousands of carp, roach and rudd from Ampthill Reservoir Lake, an amenity fishery in Bedfordshire.

The angling club reported seeing huge shoals of fish gasping at the water's surface throughout the fishery. A dedicated Fisheries Incident Officer was in touch within the hour and quickly on-site to monitor oxygen levels.

Recent hot weather and very high water temperatures encouraged algae blooms which had reduced oxygen levels in the fishery to a potentially fatal level for fish. Environment Agency fisheries officers dosed the lake with hydrogen peroxide into the early hours of Monday (19 June). They were then back on the scene first thing to monitor recovery. There are now no fish in distress, and the huge shoals of fish seen gasping have returned to normal behaviour.

Kye Jerrom, Fisheries Officer said:

Specialist officers are on duty 24 hours a day to respond to fish kills and fish in distress, all funded by rod licence income. Our team was able to respond quickly and we'd like to thank the angling club for knowing what to do.

The club suffered a similar incident 30 years ago and lost every fish in the lake. The scene when I arrived was very worrying and I am sure that our efforts have saved the fishery from a huge fish kill, which is great news for such a hardworking club, and for those who fish it.

We have provided advice and management options and will continue to work with the club to prevent a similar, and potentially devastating, event in the future. If anyone spots fish in distress then please call our incident helpline on 0800 80 70 60.

Summer can see Environment Agency staff responding to many reports of 'fish in distress' due to naturally occurring environmental changes causing lower oxygen levels in the water. Hot, sunny weather can lead to low flows in rivers and stillwater fisheries (ponds and lakes) starting to warm up. Small stillwaters are particularly susceptible.

As well as encouraging people to call them on 0800 80 70 60, the Environment Agency is encouraging private fishery owners to manage fish stocks to appropriate levels and install aerators.

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## **[Notice: PR3 6BA, Mr S Lawrenson, Mrs B Lawrenson, Mr M Lawrenson and Mrs E Lawrenson \(trading as S and BM Lawrenson and Son\): environmental permit issued](#)**

The Environment Agency publish surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit, decision document and site condition report evaluation template for:

- Operator name: Mr Stanley Lawrenson, Mrs Beatrice Lawrenson, Mr Martin Lawrenson and Mrs Emma Lawrenson (trading as S and BM Lawrenson and Son)
- Installation name: Northwoods Farm
- Permit number: EPR/BP3035CY/S003

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## **[Press release: Fish stocks boost for north east rivers](#)**

Thousands of fish were released into the River Pont at Ponteland and Matfen as well as tributaries of the rivers Wear and Tees.

It's part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plans to develop and restore

rivers in the region.

The fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, using funding from rod licence sales.



Fisheries Technical Specialist Phil Rippon was out releasing some of the grayling in the south of the region today. He said:

We're pleased we can provide these fish for restocking as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers and to help the process of natural recovery in impacted waters.

While it's a really important aspect of our work, it's one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the effects of pollution, improving habitat and removing barriers to migration.



## **Rivers have improved dramatically**

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways annually. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity in response to impacts on local rivers and using data from national fish surveys to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

[Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 \(short term and some concessionary licences are also available\) and are available online](#)

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# [News story: Judicial Review supports Brighton Marina licence decision](#)

A decision by the Marine Management Organisation to grant a marine licence relating to development in Brighton Marina has been upheld in the High Court following a Judicial Review.

On Friday 23 June the Hon. Mr Justice Holgate handed down his judgement at the High Court, London, following a hearing which took place on 22 and 23 March 2017. In doing so he concluded the MMO had fulfilled its obligation under section 69(1) of Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) 'admirably'.

In bringing a Judicial Review lawyers acting on behalf of a local resident challenged the way in which the MMO reached its decision in February 2016 to grant a marine licence for phase 2 of the development under section 71 of the 2009 Act.

Lawyers claimed that MMO had acted unlawfully in giving consent to the Brighton Marina Company Limited whose subsidiary, the Outer Harbour Development Company Partnership LLP, is carrying out the development. In particular they argued that MMO failed to consider whether phase 2 of the Brighton Marina development would amount to an actionable interference with public rights of navigation.

They also claimed that in instances where works unlawfully interfere with public rights of navigation MMO is not empowered to issue a marine licence unless a harbour revision was also made, extinguishing public navigation rights or permitting interference with the same.

## **The judgement**

In his judgement Mr Justice Holgate stated that 'the Claimant's argument involves a fundamental misunderstanding of MCAA 2009, and of section 69(1) in particular...' finding that MMO had gone to 'substantial lengths to collect evidence on the relevant navigation issues' and 'had consulted and re-consulted on the relatively narrow points raised by the claimant'.

The judgement made clear that the MMO's decision that the proposed activities would not interfere with navigation or safety of navigation in the entrance to the marina so as to justify refusing the application was a correct application of the relevant legislation. It also set out that 'there was no statutory requirement or need to consider whether the effect on public rights of navigation would also be actionable'.

The judge also denied the claimant the right to appeal the judgement.

## **More information**

The marine licence and related documents are available to view on the [public register](#) (case reference MLA/2015/00349/2). The MMO has also updated the relevant [selected cases page](#) of its website.

The Judicial Review process considers the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body. They are a challenge to the way in which a decision has been made, rather than the rights and wrongs of the conclusion reached. More information about the Judicial Review process is available on the [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website](#).