

Press release: Salmon fishing season in Trent catchment area to come to a close

With the salmon fishing season due to close in the Trent catchment area from Sunday 8 October 2017 to Wednesday 31 January 2018 inclusive, the Environment Agency is reminding anglers that failure to comply with statutory rod fishing byelaws could result in prosecution in court and a fine of up to £50,000.

Rod fishing byelaws are statutory rules put in place by the Environment Agency to protect fish stocks and apply to all waters in England, whether they are owned by angling clubs, local councils or private individuals. The close season aims to protect fish stocks from the impacts of angling during the fish breeding season.

Matt Buck, Fisheries Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

We would like to remind anglers that the salmon fishing season is due to come to a close and they should refrain from fishing for salmon until the start of February next year. This allows the impacts of angling to be minimised in order to protect fish stocks at a time when the fish are breeding.

If anglers catch any salmon by mistake when fishing for other fish throughout the salmon close season, they should allow the salmon to recover by handling them with great care so as not to damage the fish before allowing them to swim off upstream.

Survival rates for salmon are greatly increased if the appropriate angling techniques and equipment are used, and best practices for catching, handling and releasing angled fish are adopted. Between 1 February and 15 June, any salmon caught from any waters should not be removed and must be returned to the water with the least possible injury. Other restrictions also apply during this period and anglers must only use artificial fly or artificial lure to ensure the fish can be returned alive.

Anyone fishing with rod and line in England and Wales must hold a rod fishing licence and comply with the byelaws that cover the waters where they are fishing.

A special salmon and sea trout rod fishing licence is required for anyone wishing to fish for salmon and is 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 licence covers one rod for salmon in freshwater. Any salmon taken by rod and line may not be offered for sale.

Catch and release is vital to help protect and restore salmon stocks in our rivers – read our [guide for anglers](#).

[Press release: Helping pupils prepare for flooding](#)

Around 800 school children are better prepared for flooding following vital Environment Agency information sessions.

Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland, Sarah Pearce, led assemblies at schools across the area last week to help pupils understand flood risk and know what to do in a flood.

The schools involved were Handale Primary School at Loftus, Rift House Primary School in Hartlepool and Oxbridge lane Primary School in Stockton-on-Tees.

She was joined at Rift House by Coun. Marjorie James, Hartlepool Council's representative on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Sarah also launched a competition for school pupils to design a new logo which will be worn by Community Flood Wardens throughout the North East.

Awareness raising

Sarah said:

It's hoped that through these sessions with children I will raise awareness of flooding and issues associated with flooding and will be able to pass on key safety messages to young people.

Working with schools means children can be educated about what it means to be flood resilient and ensure the messages delivered have a long-term impact in flood risk areas.

It's absolutely vital that future generations understand flooding, what we do during a flood and what they can do to stay safe.

The Flood Warden Logo competition is being run right across the North East with schools taking part from the whole area. Once the winning design has been selected this will be printed on to the new Flood Warden jacket which will be presented to all flood wardens to wear during a flood incident.

Helping communities be resilient

Sarah is one of four Community Engagement Officers for the North East appointed by the Environment Agency to help communities to be more flood resilient.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for the next four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations to help support communities.

Sarah works closely with Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit, and her work includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

She's also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service Visit [the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)

You can contact Sarah at sarah.pearce@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07867 441 697.

[Press release: New inter-tidal habitat planned for Poole Harbour](#)

The Environment Agency is working with the RSPB and Natural England to explore how to adapt approximately 150 hectares of the Moors at Arne into a diverse wetland habitat. The scheme is necessary to compensate for the loss of inter-tidal habitats around Poole Harbour due to rising sea levels and the need to improve and maintain coastal defences.

Next week's drop-in event will be held on Tuesday (3 October 2017) at Wareham Town Hall from 2.00pm to 7.00pm.

When finished, the coastal change project will enable the Environment Agency and its partners to continue to protect properties around Poole Harbour from the increased risk of flooding due to climate change. It is predicted up to 10,000 local properties could be at risk within 100 years.

Important freshwater habitat and the Arne Road will continue to be protected from flooding as part of the scheme.

The loss of inter-tidal habitats through climate change and improved sea

defences is known as 'coastal squeeze'. Compensatory habitats are needed to ensure birds and other wetland species are protected and still have places to rest and feed.

Neil Watson, for the Environment Agency, said:

It is important to us the local community is involved in this project right from the start, so please come along to the drop-in session and find out more about this exciting project. We would like to hear your views.

Tony Whitehead, speaking for the RSPB, said:

We're really looking forward to meeting people in Wareham and discussing the future of the Moors at Arne. During the day we'll share more on the reasons why the proposals are being made and the implications for people, wildlife and landscape in this special part of Dorset.

[Press release: Sunderland firm fined for waste offences](#)

A Sunderland-based firm has been ordered to pay over £14,700 for breaking environmental laws, which contributed to the illegal dumping of 585 tonnes of waste.

Thompson Waste Ltd runs a waste transfer station at The Parade in Hendon. The company was handed the fine by Sunderland Magistrates' Court on 25 September 2017 after pleading guilty to charges brought by the Environment Agency for failing to comply with duty of care legislation. The legislation requires businesses to ensure their waste is transferred and disposed of legally.

Chris Bunting, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that a proportion of 585 tonnes of mixed waste, which was dumped illegally in a disused factory warehouse at Lisburn Terrace, Pallion, could be traced back to Thompson Waste Ltd. It cost the landlords of the site over £100,000 to dispose of lawfully.

Investigations showed that between September 2015 and January 2016, the company paid a local man below market rates to remove waste from their site without fulfilling their legal requirement to check it was being taken to a permitted destination. The paperwork completed failed to include required details such as the origin of the waste or an accurate description.

The Court ruled that the company had acted recklessly. In mitigation, Robin Patton, acting on behalf of the defendant, told the Court that the waste represented a tiny fraction of the company's business and that they had co-operated with the investigation.

Thompson Waste Ltd was fined £3,335 and ordered to pay compensation of £5,394 and costs of £6,000.

Rachael Caldwell, from the Environment Agency's Waste and Enforcement Department, said:

All producers and operators have a responsibility to ensure that their waste is disposed of lawfully. Those that don't are as liable for the detrimental impact it has on the environment and local communities as those that dump it.

Thompson Waste Ltd broke the law over several months, showing little regard for the environment. We hope this case demonstrates the importance of environmental compliance. Anyone who breaks the rules will be pursued, and where repeated or significant breaches are found, we will prosecute.

A trial involving other defendants allegedly linked to the illegal waste dumping in Pallion is set to take place next year.

If you see waste crime taking place report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: Waste criminals dump £750,000 clean-up bill on landowners](#)

Criminals who illegally dump thousands of tonnes of baled waste have cost land and property owners in the North East an estimated £750,000 in the last year, according to the Environment Agency.

The figure, which relates to the cost of removing waste dumped in fields and empty commercial properties lawfully, could be even higher if land is contaminated or insurance premiums rise as a result. Dumped waste is also a major fire risk.

In a bid to stop waste criminals in their tracks, the Environment Agency is reaching out to property and land owners, commercial property agents, trade associations and local authorities. Their aim is to warn of the dangers posed by waste criminals and advise them, their clients and their members how they can better protect themselves.

Jamie Fletcher, Area Environment Manager, from the Environment Agency said:

Waste criminals operate throughout the country, offering to remove waste cheaply and then dumping it in fields or empty warehouses. They tend to move to new areas as enforcement agencies become wise to their activities. We know it's only a matter of time before they target us again so we're sending out a strong message: Waste criminals are not welcome here and we're doing everything in our power to deter and catch them.

We can't do it alone. We work closely with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity. And we're encouraging everyone to do their bit: for property and land owners to be vigilant and better protect themselves and for all businesses, organisations and individuals to manage their waste responsibly, preventing it from getting into criminal hands in the first place.

Land and property owners are advised to:

- Check any empty land and property regularly and make sure it is secure.
- Carry out rigorous checks on prospective and new tenants. Land and property owners have a responsibility to ensure anyone leasing their land/property complies with regulations. They may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on land or property without the relevant permissions and could leave them liable to prosecution
- Be vigilant and report any unusual behaviour.



Advice for businesses

There are around 4,000 commercial properties across the North East thought to be empty, which are owned by up to 1,500 businesses and organisations, including fund management companies and local authorities.

The Environment Agency is also advising businesses and organisations of their responsibility to ensure their waste is managed appropriately. Anyone who produces, stores and manages waste is obligated to ensure waste does not cause harm to human health or pollution to the environment under waste under Duty of Care legislation.

Waste crime diverts as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate business and the treasury. Since April 2011 the Environment Agency has invested £65.2 million nationally to address it. Its specialist crime unit uses intelligence to track and prosecute organised crime gangs involved in illegal waste activity and to ensure any necessary action is taken against them.

The Environment Agency also works with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity and to put in place contingency plans to reduce the risk from a small number of abandoned sites at risk of fire.

Anyone who sees waste crime taking place is advised not to approach as these people can be dangerous. Report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.