

# [Press release: UK's rarest freshwater fish caught on film for the first time](#)

The film was shot on a remote controlled yellow submarine while assessing how much sediment is building up on the bottom of Derwentwater in Cumbria. [Watch it here](#)

Vendace (*coregonus albula*) is the UK's rarest freshwater fish and a relic of the ice age. Its UK habitat is in Derwentwater and like lamprey, Arctic charr, spined loach, allis shad, twaite shad and smelt, it is an international conservation priority.

The Environment Agency carries out regular surveys of water quality around the country and over the past five years has worked with farmers, businesses and water companies to improve and protect over 15,000km of rivers, lakes, coastal waters and bathing waters. England's rivers are the healthiest they've been for 20 years and salmon, sea trout and other wildlife have returned to many rivers for the first time since the industrial revolution.

Andy Gowans, Environment Agency fisheries specialist, said:

It was a unique moment to capture this iconic fish live on film. Seeing the vendace is a good indication of the health of the lake's water. Derwentwater is the only place these fish inhabit in the UK, so maintaining the quality of the water is vital for their survival.

Dr Ian Winfield, from the [Centre for Ecology & Hydrology](#), who leads the survey on Derwentwater and operated the remote-controlled yellow submarine, said:

As the day closed, I decided I would go out to the deepest part of the lake which is about 20 metres and drop the submarine in. I'm able to view the images from the submarine's filming live and was keen to see what fish showed up.

Although, the vendace came and went within in a matter of seconds, I knew it was a vendace. This was an amazing moment for a scientist, I was not expecting to see one, never mind film one. I knew I had captured for the first time on film the elusive vendace species.

The Environment Agency and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology plan to do further surveying later in the year using more advanced filming technology.

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## Press release: Fines for six Hampshire anglers caught fishing without a licence

Jack Sillence of Blackfield, Southampton was caught at Mopley Pond on 5 June 2016 and fined £660 (plus £127 costs and £66 victim surcharge leading to a total bill of £853). The exact same amount was charged to Nik Sinclair of Ringwood who was apprehended on 29 May 2016 at Hightown Lake. Andrew Turner of Southsea was caught at Broadlands Lake on 29 May 2016 and fined £660 (plus £127 costs and £60 victim surcharge). None of the above entered a plea.

Environment Manager Mike O'Neill said:

We are seeing higher and higher fines for fishing without a licence. It makes no sense to have the embarrassment of a court visit, a criminal conviction and a bill for over £800 when an annual licence is currently just £27. We think these cheats will think twice before picking up a rod illegally again and if they don't, our officers are ready and waiting.

Kerry Farr of Eastleigh was caught at Broadlands Lake on 29 May and after pleading guilty was fined £440 (plus £127 costs, £44 victim surcharge). Kristofer Cairns of Andover was apprehended on 21 May 2016 at John O'Gaunt, Kings Sombourne, didn't enter a plea and was fined £600 (plus £127 costs, £60 victim surcharge). Finally, Jonathan Ramsey of Chessington pleaded guilty having been caught on 29 May at Broadlands – he was fined £500 (plus £127 costs, £50 victim surcharge).

Mike O'Neill added:

Yesterday was a good day for the near million anglers that fish legally every year, respecting each other and the sport. There really is no excuse – if you don't have a licence, pick one up from the Post Office or online before we pick you up.

The money from licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing and protects the future of the sport. A small number of anglers refuse to buy a licence, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers.

For the minority who flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence. Fishing without a valid licence could land you with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

Overall, in 2015, Hampshire and Sussex enforcement officers checked 2,615 licences and reported 177 for fishing illegally. Last year in England, the Environment Agency checked over 62,000 rod licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A full rod licence costs from just £27 (concessions available). You can buy your rod licence [online from the Post Office](#), at your local Post Office or by phoning 0344 800 5386.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries, and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through restocking, eradicating invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

To help crack down on unlicensed fishing the Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal activity by calling the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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## **[Press release: North East man fined for illegal fishing](#)**

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers of the importance of having a rod licence after a County Durham man was fined for fishing illegally.

Dean Ferguson, 49, of Browning Hill, Coxhoe, failed to appear for his court hearing at Peterlee Magistrates' Court on Monday, 23 January.

In his absence he was fined £660, ordered to pay £127 costs and a victim surcharge of £66.

### **Intelligence-led patrols**

Shortly before midnight on the night of Saturday 6 August 2016, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were carrying out intelligence-led patrols on the River Wear in Durham city.

They saw Ferguson start fishing in the river using a double-handed salmon rod, and almost immediately he had foul-hooked a sea trout, which means the fish was hooked somewhere other than in the mouth.

He was stopped by the officers who searched his vehicle, and found the foul-

hooked fish. Ferguson also admitted he did not have a valid rod licence.

He was summonsed to appear at court for the offences. It's illegal to fish without a licence, and to fail to return to the water any fish that is foul-hooked.

## **'Vital' that anglers abide by law**

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Technical Specialist for the North East, said:

It's vital that anglers abide by the law to protect the future of the sport and the quality of our rivers and fisheries.

We won't hesitate to take action to stop illegal fishing and hopefully this will act as a deterrent for any angler thinking of cheating the system.

All the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefiting anglers.

## **Rod licence income funds improvements**

During 2016 in the North East there were six serious fisheries offences resulting in £460 in fines and £600 costs, plus forfeiture of equipment and a crushed vehicle.

There were a further 54 offenders prosecuted for 59 rod licence offences resulting in fines of £14,327, with four offenders also given conditional discharges.

Anyone discovered committing offences could face a substantial fine at court.

All income from rod licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – you can buy them online at the [Post Office](#).

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

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## **Press release: Oil and gas regulators to host public drop-in at Wakefield**

A group of public agencies is hosting a drop-in event in Wakefield to explain how they work together to regulate the onshore oil and gas industry and protect communities and the environment.

The Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Oil and Gas Authority, and Public Health England are hosting the event in the Kingswood Suite at Wakefield Town Hall, Wood Street, Wakefield, on Tuesday 7 February.

These agencies work together to assess the impacts of the oil and gas industry, to oversee industry operations, and to ensure that any exploration and development, including fracking, is done in a way that does not put people or the environment at risk of harm.

The drop-in session is one of a series of events that offer local residents, businesses and other interested parties in West Yorkshire an opportunity to find out about agencies' roles and to ask questions and discuss any issues or concerns they have about onshore oil and gas development ahead of any future applications to develop operations in the area.

Everyone is welcome to attend at any time between 2pm and 7pm.

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## **Press release: Rogue recycler found guilty for mattress mountain**

The operator of a waste mattress and bed recycling site in Smarden has been found guilty for failing to comply with relevant waste exemptions as well as failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice issued by the Environment Agency. Sentencing is due on 3 February 2017.

The charges were brought against Mr Lewis Bertram, trading as Eco Matters, Units Y & E2 Smarden Business Estate, Smarden, Ashford, Kent after an Environment Agency investigation discovered that he was operating outside of the terms of registered waste exemptions, posing a pollution and fire risk to the surrounding environment, neighbouring units and residential properties. Mr Bertram pleaded not guilty to the charges presented at Magistrates court early in 2016 and elected for the case to be heard at Crown Court. The jury returned guilty pleas to all three charges brought before the court.

Mr Bertram had been operating a mattress recycling business at the two units, which lie within close proximity to several residential properties, since

July 2013. Environment Agency visits in December 2014 and January 2015 found that the activities were not compliant with the terms of the registered waste exemptions. Environment officers informed Mr Bertram that he was committing an offence by operating the site outside of the terms of these waste exemptions and gave Mr Bertram the opportunity to comply with the specific conditions and relevant objectives in the first instance.

Further visits to monitor the situation on site in March and early April 2015 revealed that activities on site were continuing to be conducted outside of the terms of the exemptions and the volume of waste stored on site continued to increase. The Environment Agency de-registered the waste exemptions and Enforcement Notices were issued on Mr Bertram in March 2015 instructing that all waste be removed from Unit E2 and the volume of waste at Unit Y to be reduced to the 1,000 tonne limit of textiles permitted for storage under the waste exemptions by 29 May 2015.

Mr Bertram maintained a not guilty plea in relation to the non-compliance with these two notices to clear the waste for which the charges will be referred back to a magistrate's court.

No further waste had been brought to site by Mr Bertram since the de-registration of the exemptions in May 2015. However, further visits to the site conducted by environment officers in June 2015 revealed that Mr Bertram had not complied with the Enforcement Notices requesting for the removal of waste from site.

The Environment Agency worked closely with Kent Fire and Rescue Service throughout 2015 and 2016 to monitor the fire risk posed by the site and to ensure that the situation on site did not get any worse.

The site at Units Y and E2 are still full of waste mattresses, divan bed bases and their associated parts which we will continue to deal with to ensure that they are removed by those responsible.

Alan Cansdale, Environment Manager from the Environment Agency said:

His actions showed blatant disregard for local residents and businesses putting the environment and local amenity at risk. Mr Bertram ignored numerous opportunities given to him by our officers to bring the operations back into compliance.

Waste exemptions are designed for activities deemed to be of low risk to the environment and have strict conditions that must be complied with.

While we will work closely with businesses to help them comply with such legislation, in cases where individuals consistently operate illegally and in this case outside the terms of an exemption, we have no hesitation in prosecuting them to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

There are photos available on our [flickr account](#)