Press release: More than 400 rod licences checked in Easter crackdown

Environment Agency officers checked more than 400 rod licences in an Easter weekend crackdown on illegal fishing.

Officers patrolling North East river banks checked 421 anglers, reporting 29 offences.

Of these, 21 were for rod licence offences, 7 were byelaw and close season offences and one offence under the Theft Act.

It's currently the close season for coarse fishing, which means fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted. This is done to protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future.

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

> It's encouraging that the vast majority of anglers abide by the law, but there are still too many that we find during patrols that are fishing illegally.
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> We take illegal fishing very seriously – it's not fair on other anglers and endangers the future of the sport.
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> Our work is intelligence led and we work closely with our partners at the police and Angling Trust to target known hot spots and where illegal fishing is reported to us.
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> We carry out enforcement work all year round and will be continuing throughout the coming weeks, including the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends.
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> We really want people to get outdoors and enjoy what is a fantastic sport, and the rod licence is great value for money for all the family.
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> I'd urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting any suspected illegal activity to us.

All the money from rod licence sales goes back into maintaining the health of fisheries and waters, angling projects and much more.

Anyone caught fishing without a valid licence could be fined up to £2,500 and fishing during the close season attracts a fine of up to £50,000.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on

fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws

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 at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

Environment Agency officers routinely carry out licence checks and anyone with information about illegal fishing activities is urged to report it via the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Dairy researcher in Dumfries uses mobile phone to monitor cows in Nairobi

For Dr Mizeck Chagunda a mobile phone means more than just access to social media.

Professor Sarah Skerratt becomes a Fellow of Royal Society of Arts

Professor Sarah Skerratt, Director of SRUC's Rural Policy Centre, has been honoured by becoming a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Society of Arts (RSA).

SRUC researchers interact with over 2000 children at Edinburgh

International Science Festival

Over 2000 children (and enthusiastic parents!) took part in two activities hosted by SRUC researchers as part of this years' Edinburgh International Science Festival.

Top secret food and drink excellent awards judging takes place at SRUC

SRUC Elmwood has been hosting the prestigious annual Scotland's Food and Drink Excellence Award judging – designed to select the very best of Scotland's larder.