

Essex man ordered to pay almost £400 for fishing illegally

Thomas Ross, of Forest Terrace in Chigwell, was caught fishing without a licence last New Year's Eve at Heybridge Basin in Maldon.

The case was heard at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court where Ross pleaded guilty. The court fined the 39-year-old £360 and imposed a £36 victim surcharge. At a total of £396, this is almost 10 times more than the current price of a £45 fishing licence*.

Lesley Robertson, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

This case shows we pursue offenders through the courts and will not hesitate to take enforcement action where anglers flout the rules. Anyone found fishing illegally may face prosecution and a fine of up to £2,500.

All anglers need a valid Environment Agency rod licence. The money raised through the sales of rod licences is re-invested and enables us to improve all fisheries, including rivers, for anglers.

Our Fisheries Enforcement Officers routinely undertake licence checks and we urge anyone with information about illegal fishing to contact us on 0800 807060.

Licences now run 365 days from the day of purchase offering 12 full months of fishing.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1 day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence costs from just £30. Concessions are available. Junior licences are free for 13- to 16-year-olds.

Check [GOV.UK for more information or to buy a rod licence](https://www.gov.uk) or call the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively you can purchase a licence from your local Post Office branch.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by police forces and the [Angling Trust](#). Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

[Operation Lungfish](#), a month long enforcement campaign ran during the summer, which targeted poachers and those fishing without a licence. In just the first 2 weeks in East Anglia 33 offences were reported by our Fisheries Enforcement Officers.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can also contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Thomas Ross pleaded guilty of breaching Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975. He was sentenced at Chelmsford magistrates' court on 1 September 2021.

*£45 is the cost of a 12-month trout and coarse 3-rod fishing licence.