

John Wilson MBE honoured with new rod licence images

A stunning image of a Wensum River roach is the choice for one of this year's Environment Agency rod licences, commemorating the angling legend John Wilson MBE.

As in previous years, the impressive artwork has been created by the famous fish and wildlife painter David Miller.

John Wilson inspired countless anglers to take up the sport with his famous TV series Go Fishing and John Wilson's Fishing World. Recognised by the Angling Times in 2004 as the Greatest Angler of all Time, John dedicated his life to the love of his sport and to inspiring new generations to discover angling.

He was awarded an MBE in 2009 in recognition of his outstanding services to angling.

The unveiling of the image of the Wensum River roach, a beautiful blue-silvery fish with characteristic vivid red pectoral fins and red-orange eyes – Wilson's all-time favourite fish – kick-starts the angling season for 2020.

Also unveiled today are new images on the 12-month 2-rod trout and coarse licence and the 12-month salmon and sea trout licence. The 2-rod licence features the minnow, a small fish commonly found across the country in flowing waters, while the migratory salmon licence shows the Atlantic salmon in one of its juvenile forms, the parr.

Lisa Wilson, the daughter of late John Wilson and an active promoter of angling's health benefits, said:

One of my favourite memories of fishing with Dad was going on a night fishing trip when I was around four years old. I had his undivided attention and we shut the rest of the world out. It was a magical and fantastic experience of the wonders of the outdoors.

Angling gives you a marvellous range of physical and mental health benefits, bringing you closer to nature. I encourage everybody to give this sport a go this season. What a way to kick-off the new angling season while remembering our fishing legend.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency said:

We are incredibly excited to launch the new set of the rod licence images. Every year, they are hotly anticipated by all anglers and this year they are even more special. It is a privilege to commemorate the legendary figure of John Wilson and to promote his legacy to all anglers.

We encourage you to join over half a million anglers in getting your hands on this year's fabulous new licences. The funding from licence sales enables us to carry out vital projects supporting anglers and fisheries across England, such as stock surveys, improving fish stocks and waterways and promoting the sport to a wider range of people.

Helping promote John Wilson's legacy is his friend and fellow fisherman Nick Beardmore, now Environment Agency Enforcement Officer. Nick said:

John always returned to fish on Norfolk's River Wensum in the hope of catching his favourite fish.

We organised many fantastic early spring trips on this beautiful river. We were always up and out at dawn, cooking our breakfast on the boat while enjoying the fresh outdoors. John's favourite roach is usually the size of the palm of your hand, but on mine and John's favourite stretch of river they were the size of dinner plates.

The 12-month fishing rod licences start from only £30 to fish for trout and coarse fish and cost £82 for salmon and sea trout. Concessions and short term licences are available.

Buying a fishing licence is quick and easy. Licences are available from only £30 for a whole year and are available [at this link](#).

Fishing licence income is used to fund work to maintain, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. This includes river habitat improvements and construction of methods to improve fish passage, amongst other crucial projects.