

Leicestershire man made to pay for illegal fishing on River Trent

- Day's fishing trip results in penalty of £861
- Catch included critically endangered species

A man from Leicestershire has been found guilty on 2 counts of fishing illegally.

A court heard that in July 2021, Robert Graca, of Minehead Street, Leicester had caught and removed both bream and eels or shad from the River Trent in Shelford, Nottinghamshire, contrary to Nottinghamshire byelaws.

The case was brought to Nottingham Magistrates' Court by the Environment Agency on 14 February 2022. Graca, 50, was proved guilty in his absence and ordered to pay a total penalty of £861.00.

The penalty includes a fine of £660, costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £66.

Rod fishing byelaws protect fish stocks and their habitats. In the Midlands, these apply to anyone fishing with a rod and line for salmon, trout, coarse fish, eels, smelt and lamprey in all freshwater fisheries and tidal estuaries.

Greg Dytkowski, Fisheries Enforcement Officer at the Environment Agency, said:

Robert Graca has been rightly punished for the illegal fishing he undertook in Shelford, on the River Trent in Nottinghamshire.

Illegal fishing undermines the Environment Agency's efforts to protect fish stocks and make fishing sustainable. All eels or shad caught must be returned to the water unharmed, to protect what is now a critically endangered species.

This case shows how seriously the courts take these offences and we hope the high penalty will act as a deterrent to any angler who is thinking of breaking the byelaws we have in place across England.

Anyone can anonymously report fishing activities that they suspect are illegal by calling the Environment Agency's incident hotline, 24/7, on 0800 80 70 60.

Robert Graca was found guilty in his absence of removing eels or shad by rod and line from waters contrary to Byelaw 3 (lii) of the Environment Agency National Byelaws, pursuant to section 210 and schedule 25 of the Water Resources Act 1991, and contrary to section 211 of the said Act.

Graca was also found guilty of removing bream (coarse fish) by rod and line from waters contrary to Nottingham Byelaw 3 (i) of the Environment Agency National Byelaws, pursuant to section 210 and schedule 25 of the Water Resources Act 2991, and contrary to section 211 of the said Act.