

News story: Master and vessel owner ordered to pay £22,459 for fisheries offences

The court heard that in February 2017 information was received by MMO officers that led them to investigate the landing and subsequent sale of fish that had been declared by the fishing vessel Charisma (NN111).

Through analysis of CCTV footage from Sutton Harbour in Plymouth, officers identified that the vessel had not been out to sea. The vessel owner, Graham Searle was also master of the Emma Louise (PH5557), which had been fishing at the relevant time. It became clear that the incorrect vessel had been declared as having made the landing in order for the Emma Louise to land excess Pollock over her quota limit.

Mr Searle pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing on 9 July 2018, which was adjourned for sentencing until 31 July 2018. He was ordered to pay a fine of £13,295, costs of £8,994.30 and a £170 victim surcharge.

A spokesperson for the MMO said:

We are pleased the judge recognised the seriousness of these offences as a deliberate attempt to undermine regulations.

In cases like these MMO will always take proportionate and appropriate action, including prosecution, to ensure offenders do not benefit from such illegal activity and to protect fish stocks for the wider fishing industry and future generations.