

News story: Trawler owner and master ordered to pay £35,240 for fisheries offences



The court heard how on 26 January 2018, the *Illustris*, a trawler targeting nephrops, was towing two nets in an area of the North Sea known as the Farne Deeps. The vessel was boarded by MMO Marine Officers for a routine inspection and several conservation measure infringements were discovered. Seven charges were brought before the court, including excess meshes for the declared mesh size on both nets and logbook discrepancies in the recorded weight of cod, anglerfish and dab.

Sagittarius Fishing Company and skipper James Thompson both pleaded guilty to all charges.

Sagittarius Fishing Company was fined £25,931.72, ordered to pay £2,003.10 in costs and a victim surcharge of £170. James Thompson was fined £6,966 and a £170 victim surcharge.

A spokesperson for the MMO said:

The fines imposed in this case should send a strong message on the importance of protecting fish stocks. The offending took place in the Farne Deeps, an area subject to recovery measures due to the precarious nature of stocks.

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

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