

Press release: £600 penalty for man fishing without licence and removing fish

A 29-year old Nottingham man has been fined almost £600 for fishing without a licence on the River Trent at Colwick, near Nottingham, and found with a bag full of Perch which he had removed from the water.

The case was brought to Northampton Magistrates Court by the Environment Agency on 3 June 2019 where Constantinos Florin of Gregory Boulevard, Nottingham was proved guilty in absence and was ordered to pay a total penalty of £597.47. An annual fishing licence would have cost him just £30.

The penalty includes a fine of £220 for fishing without a licence contrary to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975), a fine of £220 for removing fish contrary to the Environment Agency National Byelaws (2010), costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30.

Following the verdict, Lee Watts, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency, said:

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 fishing without a licence. It also shows we are catching and prosecuting people for removing fish from waters, which is an offence under our national byelaws.

We work 24/7 and carry out our enforcement duties throughout the evening and night. We have the same powers and liabilities as a police constable to uphold the legislation and can arrest and detain offenders, enter land, stop and search, seize boats, vessels, vehicles and equipment, and ask people to show them their fishing licences.

Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence. As well as cheating other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty. Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

Anglers who wish to buy their licence online should buy it directly from GOV.UK as they will receive a reference number allowing them to go fishing on the same day. Customers who use third party sites may be charged more and might not get added to the official database as quickly.

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 available). Junior licences are free for 13-16 year olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling 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 partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency Incident Hotline 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.