

Press release: Angler faces fine of nearly £2,500 for multiple angling offences

Greg Henshaw, 35, has been fined £2,416 after being caught by an Environment Agency bailiff for multiple fishing offences, including obstructing a fishery bailiff and using an illegal bait at Ripple on the River Severn in Tewkesbury.

Henshaw was found guilty by Cheltenham Magistrates' Court on Friday 12 January for 5 offences; using an unlicensed rod and line, failing to state his name and address when asked by a Water Bailiff, fishing for fresh water in the closed season, wilfully obstructing an officer on duty and illegally using hook and bait during the prohibited close season.

Henshaw, of Wychwood Crescent in Birmingham did not appear in court. In his absence magistrates found him guilty of all charges. For each charge he was given a fine of £440, totalling £2,200, and Henshaw was also ordered to pay £172.61 and a victim surcharge of £44.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

This penalty for 1 angler is amongst the highest I've ever seen, and it's good to see that the courts take instances of obstruction against enforcement officers seriously and that offenders are prosecuted.

An annual fishing licence costs just £30, yet a small number of anglers continue to flout the law and risk prosecution for fishing without a licence. Fishing licence money is invested into England's fisheries and rivers; improving the sport of angling. So it's fellow anglers that being cheated by those who choose to fish without a licence.

Environment Agency officers are checking licences regularly throughout the year. A licence costs just £30 and now lasts for 12 months from the day you buy it.

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through re-stocking, eradicating invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Fishing licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing, to encourage participation in the sport and to manage a voluntary bailiff scheme.

Children under 12 fish for free. Anyone aged 12 to 16 also fish for free, but do need to have a valid Environment Agency fishing licence. Anyone over 16 must pay for an Environment Agency fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.