

Press release: Courts issue £177,720 in penalties to anglers

The Environment Agency revealed it prosecuted 691 people for angling offences throughout April, May and June 2017. In total, courts imposed penalties of £177,720, with the highest being £974. Some 314 offenders received penalties of over £300, ten times the price of a year's legal fishing.

The most common offence was fishing without a valid licence, which could see offenders landing fines of up to £2,500 and a criminal conviction. Other offences included removing coarse fish contrary to national byelaws put in place to protect fish stocks. During the restricted period the Environment Agency carried out 17,589 fishing licence checks and issued 963 offence reports.

Kevin Austin, our new Deputy Director for Fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency and its partners take unlicensed angling very seriously. While only a minority of anglers seek to evade the law and do not buy a licence if only 5% of anglers didn't buy a £30 annual licence this would represent a loss of around £1.5m to the sport and to the environment.

Anyone fishing without a licence can expect to be prosecuted, fined and face having a criminal conviction. Obtaining a fishing licence is easier than ever and costs from just £30 for the year and remember that the junior licence is now free – there is no excuse.

Anyone who suspects illegal fishing to be taking place should report the matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.