

Press release: Fishing trip nets Gloucester man with over £800 fines and costs

Following a joint patrol with the Environment Agency, Angling Trust and Gloucestershire Police, Frank Cole was found guilty in his absence at Northampton Magistrates' Court on 26 November for fishing during the closed season and fishing without a licence on the River Severn on 31 May 2018. A charge that the 52-year old of Bibury Road, Gloucester, failed to give his name and address to an Environment Agency bailiff when requested to do so, was also proved. Magistrates fined him £660 in total, and imposed costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30. Angling is not allowed during the closed season in order to protect spawning fish stocks.

A spokesperson from the Environment Agency said:

Working with the Angling Trust's Voluntary Bailiffs and Gloucestershire Police is a great way we can jointly tackle rural and wildlife crime.

Dilip Sarkar MBE, Angling Trust National Enforcement Manager added:

Part of the overall partnership enforcement strategy is raising awareness of the crucial need to report incidents to the police and Environment Agency. This case was detected because information was provided to our Fisheries Enforcement Support Service by anglers. This was passed on to the authorities who worked together to decisively deal with the offender. This is a perfect example of team-work in action.

Working with partners is an essential way the Environment Agency works to tackle illegal fishing. In partnership with the Angling Trust, there are Voluntary Bailiffs in action across the country helping us keep watch on their local waters and report incidents. The Environment Agency also works closely with local police as part of the overarching National Wildlife Crime Unit initiative, to tackle wildlife and rural crime.

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 and breaching byelaws in place to protect fish stocks.

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 13 fish for free. Anyone aged 13 to 16 also fish for free, but they 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 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.