

Press release: North Tyneside man fined for illegal fishing

David Hetherington, 27, of Matfen Gardens in Wallsend, was charged with fishing without a licence and failing to give his name and address to an Environment Agency officer.

Hetherington had his case heard at Newcastle upon Tyne Magistrates' Court on Thursday 2 May. He was ordered to pay a total of £649 in fines, victim surcharge and costs, and his fishing tackle was confiscated.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 28 September 2018, David Hetherington fished without a fishing licence and without permission from Wylam Angling Club, which owns the fishing rights.

Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer, David Shears, was on patrol along a stretch of the River Tyne in Wylam, Northumberland, where he found Mr Hetherington fishing.

The officer approached Mr Hetherington, who was sitting on a bank downstream with a spinning rod. Hetherington was asked to produce his licence, which he could not. Hetherington refused to cooperate and a scuffle took place, after which Mr Hetherington ran away, leaving his fishing equipment behind.

The officer was able to track down Mr Hetherington to his home address, when it was confirmed that Hetherington did not hold a licence.

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers of the importance of having a fishing licence.

David Shears, Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and buy a fishing licence. Those that don't are cheating their fellow anglers and endangering the future of the sport.

In addition, those that flout the law risk a criminal conviction, a fine, and could lose their fishing equipment. It's just not worth it.

The River Tyne is an important habitat for salmon, trout, coarse fish and eels. It is among the premier salmon rivers in England and Wales.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Income from licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a fishing licence is quick and easy. You can buy [fishing licences online](#).

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