

[Press release: River coarse fishing season in full swing](#)

River coarse fishing is back in full swing following the three month close season from 15 March to 15 June.

And to kick off the new season Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement officers in the North East carried out a weekend blitz to ensure anglers were abiding by the law.

Patrols on Saturday saw the team patrol 43 rivers and stillwaters in the region by land and boat checking a total of 185 anglers, with five rod licence offences detected.

During the three-month close season the North East team carried out 87 patrols detecting 26 close season and 7 rod licence offences.

Proactive patrols

Rachael Caldwell, Enforcement Team Leader in North East, said:

Our enforcement team is really proactive in carrying out patrols to prevent and detect rod licence and other associated offences.

They have a close relationship with partners and act on information and intelligence to target patrols to the right areas and at the right time. This is reflected in the close season figures, which are some of the best in the country. Law abiding anglers can be reassured our teams are taking action.

Across the country, the Environment Agency reported 87 close season offences during the first 10 weeks of the annual restricted period for coarse fish. Officers carried out 729 targeted patrols, also detecting 115 other offences, mainly unlicensed fishing, but also several illegally set traps.

Operation CLAMPDOWN

As well as working with partners at the police and angling clubs, the Environment Agency was supported across the country by Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiff Service members on Operation CLAMPDOWN. Now in its sixth year, the operation is a joint initiative between the Environment Agency, Angling Trust's Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and police forces, aimed at gathering intelligence about illegal fishing.

Dilip Sarkar MBE, Angling Trust National Enforcement Manager, said:

These figures show that during Operation CLAMPDOWN 6 Volunteer

Bailiffs throughout England are demonstrating their massive commitment to protecting fish and fisheries and cracking down on illegal fishing. All anglers can help this process, in fact – at any time of year – by reporting information and offences in progress to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60, or the police on 101/999 as appropriate.

The summer is a great time to get out there and go fishing, but the Environment Agency is reminding anglers to make sure they have a fishing licence before they go. Rachael added:

It's a great time to go fishing. So I'd encourage anglers to get out there, enjoy yourselves fishing and make sure you are doing the right thing.

The vast majority of anglers fish legally; sadly there are a small number who cheat others by fishing during the close season. It is still possible for anglers to fish during this time on many stillwaters and canals, which are open all year round.

We respond to the intelligence we receive about illegal fishing by ensuring our patrols are targeted at the right places – and the right people.

You can [buy a licence online](#) and don't forget that all fishing licence income is used to fund work to protect, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. If you want to fish a new river this season, why not visit the [fishinginfo website](#) to find details of different venues, river levels and angling clubs.

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.