

[Press release: River coarse fishing season starts tomorrow](#)

It's 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.

You can buy a [fishing 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 [fishinginfo](#) to find details of different venues, river levels and angling clubs.

Volunteers helping to tackle illegal close season angling

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

Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were supported again by Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiff Service members on Operation CLAMPDOWN. Now in its sixth year, Operation CLAMPDOWN 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 and responding through targeted patrols.

Patrols took place across rivers, streams, drains and on specific canals and stillwaters that still retain the close season.

Kevin Austin, Environment Agency Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, said:

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.

I'd like to thank the Angling Trust volunteers for the significant role they play in stopping illegal fishing through their work on Operation CLAMPDOWN.

The vast majority of anglers fish legally; sadly there are a small number of anglers 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.

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.”

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.