

# Press release: Rod licensing blitz identifies 23 offenders

Environment Agency Officers led a series of rod licence enforcement patrols around various sites in Essex and Norfolk, on the back of intelligence received. They were joined by colleagues from Essex and Norfolk Police forces, the Broads Authority and volunteer bailiffs from the Angling Trust.

Over a total of three days (6, 9 and 10 September 2017), eight Essex fisheries were checked, and one river stretch patrolled in Norfolk (the River Bure).

Officers checked dozens of anglers, stressing the importance of buying a rod licence and explaining how the income is reinvested in fisheries. A total of 224 rod licences were checked and 23 offenders identified (a 10.26% evasion rate).

Lesley Robertson, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

These checks were badged under the name Operation Springfield II. The Operation focused on rod licence evasion and raising awareness of the need for anglers to purchase and renew their rod licences.

Our Officers patrol the watercourses all year round, including holidays and weekends. Those who avoid buying a rod licence and are found fishing illegally may face prosecution and a hefty fine. Anglers should ensure they are properly licensed before going out to enjoy this worthwhile hobby.

Essex Police Rural and Heritage Crime Officer, PC Andrew Long, said:

Like other forces across the UK, Essex Police have joined with the Environment Agency and Angling Trust to work together and tackle criminality surrounding theft of fish and unlawful fishing.

This has an impact on one of the country's most popular pastimes, with more than 1.5 million people buying rod licences every year.

Taking part in unlawful fishing can have a detrimental effect on the environment so it's important for us to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and ensure everyone has the correct licence to do this.