

[Press release: Two men fined for illegal fishing](#)

Two men have been fined hundreds of pounds for fishing illegally at a County Durham pond.

In separate incidents Lee Watson, 33, of East Street in Grange Villa, Chester-le-Street, and David Bilverstone, 25, of Northlands, Chester-le-Street, were both charged with fishing without a licence and failing to give their addresses to an Environment Agency officer.

Both had their cases proved in absence at Hull Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 22 January. They were both ordered to pay £697.47 in fines and costs.

Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were on patrol at Ouston Springs Pond, Chester-le-Street, checking the rod licences of anglers on 9 August 2018 as part of routine patrols. The two men were not at the pond together.

Buy a fishing 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 rod 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 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.

All income from rod 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 rod licence is quick and easy – [you can buy them 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.