

Staffordshire anglers prosecuted for fishing illegally

- Two offences land Tamworth angler with fines totalling £751
- Stoke fisherman pays £191 for illegal fishing
- Cases heard at Northampton magistrates court on 21 November 2022

At Northampton magistrates on 21 November 2022, Lee Whitehead, 32, of French Avenue, Mile Oak, Tamworth, pleaded guilty to fishing illegally and to refusing to give his name and address to an officer from the Environment Agency.

Whitehead's offences took place at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, on 19 June 2022. He was fined £220 for each offence and ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim's surcharge of £176.

The case of Lucian Blaga, 37, of Bartholomew Road, Stoke, was also heard by the magistrates. He was fined £40 and ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim's surcharge of £16 for fishing illegally on the River Dove at Uttoxeter on 19 June 2022.

Following the verdict, a spokesperson for the Environment Agency, said:

We're pleased how seriously the courts take these offences. Lee Whitehead has been rightly punished for his offences.

He did not have a valid licence, but he was also unhelpful when questioned by our officers.

We will not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our officers who routinely undertake licence checks.

All of the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries for the benefit of anglers. For those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence.

As well as cheating other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty.

Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

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.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence to fish. A 1-day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence currently costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 to 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

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

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 807060 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Background

Lee Whitehead was charged with the following:

- On 19 June 2022 at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, in a place where fishing is regulated fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27 (1) (a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.
- On 19 June 2022 at Stubby Leas Carp Fishery, Lichfield, when fishing, failed, when required to do so, to state his name and address to a water bailiff of the Environment Agency having power to make such a request contrary to Section 35 (3) of and Schedule 4 to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Lucian Blaga was charged with the following:

- On 28 June 2022 on River Dove at Uttoxeter in a place where fishing is regulated fished for freshwater fish or eels by means of an unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27 (1) (a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.