

Press release: Illegal angler hooks hefty fine

A fishing trip to Lincolnshire has landed a man from Manchester with £597-worth of penalties after he was found breaking angling laws.

Mr John Handley of Herristone Road, Manchester, left his rod in the water unattended and was fishing without a licence at Lakeside Fishery, Wragby, on 21 June 2016.

He was discovered by Environment Agency enforcement officers, who carry out patrols designed to catch illegal anglers in the act – and protect the sport for those who do follow the rules.

Mr Handley was proved guilty in absence at Lincoln Magistrates' Court on 13 March 2017. He was fined £440 – £220 for each offence – and ordered to pay costs of £127, as well as a victim surcharge of £30, bringing the total penalty to £597.

Adam Basham, Environment Agency enforcement team leader, said:

By leaving his rod unattended, Mr Handley could have injured wildlife, and his refusal to buy a fishing licence harms the future and protection of the sport, effectively cheating the tens of thousands of anglers who do follow the rules.

We never hesitate to take action against offenders.

Leaving a fishing rod unattended is an offence under Environment Agency byelaws because of the danger it poses to fish and other wildlife, which can become entangled in the line or swallow the hook.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full yearly fishing licence costs from just £30 and are available online at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence, by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5286, or from your local Post Office branch. Short-term and concessionary licences are also available.

The money from licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing, and protects the future of the sport. It funds a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, including protecting stocks from disease and illegal fishing; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. The income is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

A small number of anglers refuse to buy a licence, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers. For the minority who flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence, which could land them with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal conviction.

In 2015/16, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire enforcement officers checked 3,710 licences and reported 73 for fishing illegally, bringing in fines and costs totalling £16,810.

Last year in England, the Environment Agency checked more than 62,000 fishing licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences, resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

To help crack down on illegal fishing, the Environment Agency urges people to report suspect activity by calling its incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[National Statistics: Monthly sea fisheries statistics January 2017](#)

Updated: Text updated

The monthly landings statistics will be released at 9.30am on the 4th Friday of each month, or the next working day if this is a bank holiday.

[Official Statistics: Point of first release: statistics on abundance of UK butterflies](#)

Trends of UK butterfly species are based on results of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), presented at UK level, and at country level where there are sufficient data. The UKBMS helps the UK to meet its obligations under the European Habitats Directive (for Marsh Fritillary and Large Blue), and to report on, implement or deliver country biodiversity strategies and biodiversity indicators.

The UKBMS is run by Butterfly Conservation, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, and the British Trust for Ornithology, in partnership with a consortium of government agencies. The UKBMS is indebted to all volunteers

who contribute data to the scheme.

National Statistics: Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report – 2017

This report is intended to be the first reference point for a range of environmental indicators and will provide, where available, annual updates on the indicators contained within it. It is of both public and academic interest and provides a valuable resource across government in providing links to government strategies.

Press release: Ruthless fly-tipper jailed

A fly-tipper who left a trail of waste across the Devon countryside was finally brought to justice today when he was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

Martin McDonagh, 23, failed to turn up at Plymouth Crown Court and was made the subject of a European Arrest Warrant following the sentencing hearing. Judge Ian Lawrie described him as a 'persistent offender who showed a ruthless determination to dump waste wherever it suited.'

McDonagh, who is believed to have fled to the Republic of Ireland, was also ordered to pay a total of £7,000 costs for illegally depositing commercial and household waste at numerous sites in South and West Devon. The court also issued a Criminal Behaviour Order that prohibits McDonagh from being involved in any business enterprise involving the collection, carrying or transport of waste.

The van used during his crime spree was seized and destroyed by the Environment Agency. It is the first time, in the South West, that the agency has ordered the destruction of a vehicle used to commit waste crimes.

The defendant was caught following a joint investigation led by the Environment Agency, with support from Teignbridge District Council, Plymouth City Council, West Devon District Council, South Hams District Council and Devon and Cornwall Police.

Adrian Evans, senior environment crime officer for the Devon and Cornwall

area, said:

This case serves as a reminder for people to be vigilant when transferring waste for disposal. Any person who collects and disposes of commercial or household waste must be a registered waste carrier, authorised by the Environment Agency.

Everyone has a duty of care to ensure their waste is disposed of safely and doesn't harm the environment. You should ask to see an operator's waste carrier licence and whether your waste is being taken to an authorised site. Do not let your waste be removed if you are in any doubt. These simple steps can stop rogue fly-tippers in their tracks.

The illegal disposal of waste in the countryside and local beauty spots causes annoyance and upset to local people and visitors. The serial fly-tipper in this case was caught as a result of agencies working closely together, sharing intelligence and resources to protect our environment.

McDonagh cold-called people across Devon offering to take waste away for cash. He told them the waste would be taken to a local tip, but instead he dumped it in the surrounding countryside, including local beauty spots.

Several witnesses said they felt pressured into giving him their waste. One woman, who was at home with a sick child, described the defendant as 'extremely pushy' and said she felt 'increasingly uneasy'. She only agreed to pay for him to take her waste to 'get rid of him'.

Another householder, in Exeter, became suspicious and told McDonagh she didn't want him to fly-tip her waste. McDonagh laughed and replied, 'of course not.'

Sometimes the defendant would ask for more cash after he'd loaded waste onto his van. One woman paid him £75. He returned after she had done some more clearing and tidying of her property and asked for £125 to take the rest of the waste claiming he was 'out of pocket' for the first lot he'd taken to the tip.

Victims of his scam were traced using documents and paperwork found in the fly-tipped waste. Most said they'd been approached by a man driving a 'tatty' blue van.

Up to 40 bags of mixed household waste were deposited at a time at numerous locations. Teignbridge sites included a car park on Little Haldon, a council gravel store off Greenway Lane in Ashcombe, a compound at Teignmouth Golf Club, a bus stop on the A381 near Ware Farm, an unclassified road near Shaldon and beside a road junction in Newton Abbot.

McDonagh also dumped waste at Cold Harbour Cross in the South Hams, a car park on the A386 near Clearbrook and at Calisham Cross in West Devon. The

offences were committed over a 12-month period from July 2015.

The defendant was paid between £50 and £400 to remove waste – always in cash. He also offered other services including roofing, decking and power washing.

In August 2015, McDonagh was seen transferring concrete rubble from his Ford Transit van to a similar van parked nearby in Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth. Teignbridge District Council decided to remove the second vehicle after it was found to have been abandoned.

However, a contractor hired to remove the van was unable to take the vehicle away after he saw what he believed to be asbestos in the back, along with other waste. Police closed Lower Brimley Road for a day while specialist contractors decontaminated the abandoned van. Subsequent analysis of the waste confirmed the presence of asbestos. The vehicle was later destroyed.

Councillor Roger Croad, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment, said:

The high level of co-operation between the different agencies and councils involved in this investigation was critical in bringing this offender to justice. The Devon and Somerset Trading Standards Service will continue to do all it can to protect residents and legitimate local businesses from such illegal trading activities.

Councillor Sylvia Russell, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing at Teignbridge District Council, said:

This is a great outcome for taxpayers and involved a tremendous amount of effort by investigating officers. Tackling the scourge of fly-tipping is a top priority for Teignbridge Council, which works hard to protect the environment. Dealing with fly-tipping is costly, time consuming, frustrating for law-abiding citizens and wholly avoidable. We will continue to work with the Environment Agency and our partners to find out who is responsible so we can prosecute.

Councillor Rufus Gilbert, South Hams District Council's Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, said:

We are taking a very robust line on fly-tipping in the South Hams and have issued 13 fixed penalty notices against offenders. We are delighted that these cases are now coming to court. I assure you, we will continue whenever possible to prosecute future offenders.

Councillor Robert Sampson, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for Commercial Services, said:

It is crucial fly-tippers are traced and prosecuted for the damage they do to our countryside. This case shows what can be achieved by working closely with our partners.

At an earlier hearing, McDonagh, of Pemros Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, pleaded guilty to 2 offences under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, of illegally depositing controlled waste at various sites across Devon. He also pleaded guilty to an offence under the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989, of transporting controlled waste without being registered as a waste carrier.

The second offence under the Environmental Protection Act was for depositing building waste (including asbestos) at Lower Brimley Road, Teignmouth on 9 July, 2016 in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm to human health.

Judge Lawrie said McDonagh would have faced a 2-year prison sentence had he not submitted a guilty plea. Upon issuing the arrest warrant Judge Lawrie said, 'bring him back before the court.'

Members of the public can report waste crime by calling the Environment Agency's free 24-hour hotline 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. [Find further information on waste collection.](#)