

Press release: How to fish responsibly during Somerset's elver season

With the 2017 elver season under way, the Environment Agency is reminding Somerset's elver fishermen to stay the right side of the law.

Eels are an endangered species and recognised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as in need of protection. Fishing for elvers is allowed in England and Wales, but under strict conditions to ensure stocks are not over-exploited.

The elver season runs from 15 February – 25 May inclusive and is largely limited to the Rivers Parrett and Tone. There are approximately 200 licenced elver fishermen in Somerset who must register with the Environment Agency at the start of the season.

Sustainable fishing includes the capture of elvers for re-stocking in countries across Northern Europe where eel stocks have declined and cannot be replenished naturally.

All elver fishing in Somerset is done with hand held nets known as 'dip nets'. They are restricted in size to 1m long, 0.8m wide and 0.45m deep. Handle lengths should be no longer than 4m. Fishing from boats is prohibited and no other large nets or traps are allowed. As a further precaution, all nets must be tagged and fishermen have photographic ID.

Elvers are attracted to fresh water so to protect stocks, no fishing is permitted within 10m of any river obstruction, dam, inlet, outlet or fish pass that hinders the passage of elvers. A full list of rules can be found in the elver fishing bylaws.

Richard Dearnley for the Environment Agency said:

We recognise the majority of elver fishermen operate responsibly and respect the law. We work closely with the police in detecting illegal fishing and, where we have evidence, won't hesitate to prosecute offenders.

Any illegal or suspicious activity can be reported to the Environment Agency or Crimestoppers. If you would like to report information on environmental crime anonymously, call 0800 555111.

Press release: West Midlands company director handed penalty by court for waste offences

On 16 February 2017, Jaskaran Bhandal, Director of Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, Oak Farm, Kingswinford, West Midlands pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to 1 count of failing to remove waste from the site, and 1 count of operating a waste site without an authorised environmental permit.

Mr Bhandal was fined £1,332, ordered to pay £3,265 in costs, along with a £120 victim surcharge and disqualified from being a company director for 5 years.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency under Section 59(5) and 157 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and contrary to Regulations 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) and 41 (1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Environment Agency Officers had been working with Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd to bring the site into compliance under their environmental permit until it was revoked. This decision was upheld at an appeal made to the Planning Inspectorate, and the company was ordered to remove all the waste from the site by 2 July 2014.

Officers visited the site in November 2015 and saw that significant amounts of new waste had been deposited at the site. Officers made a number of enquires and determined that the waste had been deposited by Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, after their permit had been revoked.

Officers served a Notice to Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd in May 2016 to remove all the illegally deposited waste by 19 November 2016. Officers visited the site on 22 November 2016 and noted some attempts had been made to remove the waste but the vast majority remained in situ.

Mr Bhandal was interviewed and admitted to knowing the site did not hold the relevant permits to carry out the work undertaken, he also accepted he was unable to comply with the Notice served but this was due to financial reasons.

Speaking after the case, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

The successful prosecution of this case should send out a clear message that the Environment Agency is adopting a robust approach to ensuring those who flout the law are brought to justice. Despite extensive previous efforts to work with the company and seek compliance, it became apparent that prosecution remained the only

option to deal with this matter appropriately.

In mitigation, the court heard that the defendant had pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity, had co-operated with the Environment Agency during the interview and that he was sorry for the offences committed.

Press release: Government support for more than 19,000 victims of domestic abuse

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has today (17 February 2017) confirmed that 76 projects across the country will receive a share of £20 million to support victims of domestic abuse, creating more than 2,200 new bed spaces in refuges and other specialist accommodation.

This will support more than 19,000 victims with somewhere safe to live and rebuild their lives, and provide further access to education, employment and life skills training.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Domestic abuse is a devastating crime that all too often remains hidden. That's why we're determined that no victim will be turned away from the help they need, at the time they need it.

This significant investment shows our clear commitment to supporting and strengthening a resilient network of refuge services across the country, with further specialist support to help victims go on to rebuild their lives.

Last November, the government published its "Priorities for Domestic Abuse Services" setting out what local areas need to put in place to make sure their approach to domestic abuse is collaborative, robust and effective.

This latest funding has been awarded to local areas that will deliver on these priorities – for example by working collaboratively across local authority boundaries and with other partners, including specialist domestic violence service providers to strengthen support.

The funding will support a wide range of services and safe accommodation, including refuges, outreach services, Sanctuary Schemes, which help those at risk of violence to stay safe in their own homes through improved security measures and mainstream local authority accommodation.

Given that victims of domestic abuse will have different needs, many of the projects being supported are tailored towards support for specific groups including women with mental health issues, substance abuse problems, or the particular needs of different ethnic minority communities.

Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

Domestic abuse ruins lives with many victims forced to leave their homes for their own safety and to access the services they urgently need.

Real change will only happen at the local level and it's these authorities that are best placed to identify the best solutions. We're clear that the victim must always come first and must always be able to access the specialist accommodation help and support they need.

Case studies

Newcastle City Council

This project will look to improve and strengthen the availability of and access to refuges alongside other specialist accommodation including self-contained flats. This will be matched with improved support visits together with dedicated care for victims with complex needs, such as problematic drug use.

While the project is led by Newcastle City Council, it will be supported by 6 neighbouring councils, 9 specialist domestic abuse service and refuge providers, local health partnerships, drug misuse charities, housing providers as well as the local police service and the local Police and Crime Commissioner.

By working across councils and the relevant agencies the project aims to identify victims' needs at a much earlier stage, improve their non-crisis work and offer better resettlement accommodation.

Suffolk Satellite Accommodation and Support

This project is a partnership between Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council and 7 district councils, with support from the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, Phoebe, Anglia Care Trust, and local refuges.

The aim of the project is to provide more accommodation for victims of domestic abuse who do not meet the criteria to be supported in refuge accommodation. This extra housing will be sourced through the local authority, registered social landlords and the private rented sector.

Working closely with existing refuges, the aim is to create a flexible alternative that also offers specialist support to meet the particular needs

of victims with complex needs such as mental health issues or those from a BME background. The 3 refuges in Suffolk will also be able to use these extra spaces as 'move on' accommodation when the risk to the victim has reduced or when the victim is ready for greater independence.

Further information

These latest allocations follow the announcement of the £20 million fund to support victims of domestic abuse made on 3 November 2016.

See the [full list of allocations](#) (PDF, 392KB, 13 pages)

The government has already taken steps to end domestic abuse, support victims and make sure offenders are prosecuted. This includes:

- new powers and laws – a new domestic abuse offence to capture coercive and controlling behaviour, the criminalisation of forced marriage, and the introduction of new stalking laws
- the national roll-out of domestic violence protection orders and the domestic violence disclosure scheme
- £15 million support for a 3-year Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service Transformation Fund
- £3.5 million provided in 2015 that funded 46 successful bids from around the country, providing 710 extra bed spaces
- £10 million provided in 2014 to 2016, which benefitted 148 areas to support refuges across the country and boost provision for vulnerable victims of domestic violence

[Press release: Six year ban for Watford restaurant boss](#)

Saiful Alam, the sole registered director of Nuha Limited, which traded as the Prince of Bengal, an Indian restaurant and takeaway on Langley Way in Watford, has been disqualified from acting as a company director for six years for causing the company to employ two illegal workers.

Saiful Alam's disqualification follows collaboration between the Insolvency Service and Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE).

On inspecting the premises of Nuha Limited in December 2014, HOIE officials found two illegal workers and imposed a penalty of £30,000.

Payment of the penalty was due by 21 April 2015 but Mr Alam decided to place the company into liquidation before this and so the penalty remained unpaid.

At liquidation in March 2015, the company had a recorded deficiency in excess

of £139,000. This included the £30,000 penalty imposed and a further £30,000 in unpaid VAT and other tax.

The disqualification means that Saiful Alam can not be a director of a company whether directly or indirectly, or be involved in the management of a company in any way for the duration of his disqualification unless he has permission from Court.

Commenting on the disqualification, David Brooks, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service said:

The Insolvency Service rigorously pursues directors who fail to pay penalties imposed by the government for breaking employment and immigration laws. We have worked closely in this case with our colleagues at the Home Office to achieve this disqualification.

The director sought to gain an unfair advantage over his competitors by employing individuals who did not have the right to work in the UK in breach of his duty as a director.

The public has a right to expect that those who break the law will face the consequences. Running a limited company, means you have statutory protections as well as obligations. If you fail to comply with your obligations the Insolvency Service will investigate and you run the risk of being removed from the business environment.

Saiful Alam, 46, was the sole registered director of Nuha Limited (CRO No. 05022502), which was incorporated in January 2004 and traded as an Indian Restaurant and Takeaway from Langley Way, Watford. His date of birth is 15 August 1970.

Mr Alam has been disqualified for a period of 6 years commencing from 31 January 2017.

One of the main purposes of the Company Directors Disqualification Act is to ensure that proper standards of conduct of company directors are maintained and to raise those standards where appropriate.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Press release: Former Bristol pub landlord disqualified](#)

Owain Charles Evans George, the Director of OMI Partnership Limited trading as The Albion, a pub in Clifton near Bristol, has been disqualified for three and a half years for trading to the detriment of HM Revenue and Customs.

The disqualification, from 28 February 2017, prevents Mr George from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company until August 2020. It follows an investigation by the Insolvency Service which found he had unfairly discriminated against HMRC by choosing to pay other trade creditors in advance of the company's VAT owed to HMRC for a period between January 2014 and 13 February 2015.

OMI Partnership Limited was placed into Liquidation on 13 February 2015 with an estimated deficiency to creditors in excess of £627,825 and outstanding VAT bill totalling £180,567.

Mr George was a director from 9 November 2004 to liquidation.

Robert Clarke, Senior Investigator, said:

Company directors have a duty to ensure businesses meet their legal obligations, including paying taxes. Deliberate neglect of tax affairs is not a victimless action – it deprives public services of vital money and introduces unfair competition in the business market.

The Insolvency Service will investigate and take action against directors who do not comply with their obligations.

Mr George's date of birth is September 1969 and it is believed he is currently of no fixed abode.

OMI Partnership Limited (CR0 No. 05275045) was incorporated on 01 November 2004 and latterly traded as a public house from The Albion, Boyces Avenue, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4AA.

The Company went into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation on 13 February 2015 with an estimated deficiency of £627,825. A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

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Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7596 6187

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