

The 2020 close season for coarse fishing commences

This year's close season commences on 15 March and runs until 15 June inclusive.

During this time, Environment Agency (EA) officers conduct patrols to enforce the close season. As part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, now in its eighth year, Angling Trust (AT) volunteers support the EA by keeping watch on riverbanks and reporting incidents to the 24-hour incident hotline.

The annual close season helps to protect fish stocks across England when they are spawning by preventing fishing for coarse fish in rivers, streams, drains and specified canals, as well as the 'site of special scientific interest' (SSSI) stillwaters.

EA officers and AT volunteers patrol riverbanks and streams to ensure anglers observe the close season rules. They also regularly patrol lakes, canals and ponds to make sure all anglers have a valid rod fishing licence. Anyone fishing without a fishing licence can be prosecuted.

During last year's coarse fish close season campaign, 761 patrols were conducted reporting 178 illegal or unlicensed offences.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency, said:

We have an important role to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries while making sure that all anglers fish legally.

We take illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally should expect to be prosecuted and to face a substantial fine. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a statutory close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area on GOV.UK.

- to help tackle unlicensed and illegal fishing, the Environment Agency urges anyone to report incidents by calling the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111
- the coarse fish close season runs from 15 March until 15 June inclusive

- on rivers, streams, drains, some canals and specified SSSI still waters
- information on close seasons and other byelaws can be found on [GOV.UK](#)
 - if you want to continue to fish whilst the river coarse fish close season is in force, you can visit many stillwaters and canals, depending on landowner agreement
 - enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally. Annual fishing licences are available from only £30
 - it's easy to buy online. [Get a fishing licence on GOV.UK](#)
 - fishing licence income is used to fund work to maintain, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. This includes improving fish passage, river habitat improvements and fish rescues, as well as activities to promote angling
 - you can learn more about how the licence fee income is used in [EA's Annual Fisheries Report](#)
 - visit the [go fishing](#) website to find out about angling events, fisheries and venues to go fishing