

Three anglers prosecuted after obstructing fisheries bailiff

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted 3 men from Liverpool for wilfully obstructing a water bailiff following an incident in Staffordshire last April.

Jack O'Callaghan, 30, of Tynwald Place; Patrick Jones, 35, of Judges Drive and Alan Clelland, 56, of Snaefell Ave pleaded guilty in a case held at North Staffordshire Magistrates' Court in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, on 9 September 2019.

O'Callaghan was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £480 while Jones and Clelland were each ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £400.

O'Callaghan admitted 3 other charges in that he fished without a licence, fished in the close season and failed, when required to do so, to state his name and address to the bailiff.

Jones admitted 2 other charges in that he fished in the close season and without a licence. Clelland admitted one other offence in fishing during the close season.

Environment Agency enforcement officers received intelligence that 3 men were fishing on the River Trent at Great Haywood in Staffordshire on April 19, 2019.

They were later spotted in the grounds of nearby Shugborough Hall where they were fishing the River Sow.

EA officers and estate rangers attempted to speak with the men. However, a short foot chase ensued where the suspects became aggressive and also tried to hide within bushes.

Having been joined by officers from Staffordshire Police, the men were eventually apprehended on the main road in Great Haywood.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said: "This case shows how determined we are in catching and prosecuting people who flout the laws and obstruct our officers in carrying out their duties.

"An annual fishing licence costs just £30, yet a small number of anglers continue to risk prosecution for fishing without a licence and breaching byelaws in place to protect fish stocks."

People caught fishing without a licence can be fined up to £2,500. Children under 13 do not need a licence. Licences for children aged between 13 and 16 are free, but a junior licence is required.

Anyone who suspects illegal fishing to be taking place should report the

matter to the Environment Agency's incident hotline, on 0800 807060.

Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

For more information and to buy a rod licence go to www.gov.uk/buy-a-uk-fishing-rod-licence.