

Two men fined for poaching in Northumberland

David Moore, 30, of Staffen Court, Amble, and Adam Nyberg, 39, of Leslie Drive, Amble, were both charged with illegally fishing for salmon and sea trout with a gill net in the river Coquet near Amble.

They pleaded guilty when they appeared at Newcastle Magistrates' Court on Thursday, 20 May. They were both fined £500, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £50, and the forfeiture and destruction of the net was ordered.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 29 July 2019 the Environment Agency received a report that two men had set a gill net across the River Coquet near Amble.

Gill nets are designed to catch fish by their gills and are rarely licensed in rivers due to their indiscriminate nature and the fact the fish caught in the nets will usually suffocate and die.

Fisheries officers attended and saw men matching their descriptions in the area. They kept watch of the river where the gill net had been set and using a thermal imager and night vision they saw the defendants by the side of the river, with one wading out towards where officers had been told the net was set.

They were both arrested and the net was later recovered after it had come loose from the river bank. It had caught 14 fish – 12 sea trout and 2 salmon – 10 of which were dead.

Gill nets 'extremely damaging to fish stocks'

Both defendants said they had been fishing to feed themselves and their families and had not given a great deal of thought about the consequences of their actions, although they admitted they had offended deliberately.

Following the case, David Shears, Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

Gill nets such as the one used in this case are designed to catch fish by their gills and can be extremely damaging to fish stocks. Illegal fishing can have a devastating impact, particularly on migratory fish, while other wildlife can also get caught up in the nets.

We'll continue to act on information received and work closely with our partners and angling clubs, supported by the Angling Trust, to take action against those flouting the law. This case demonstrates that we do act on the information that is passed to us.

To report illegal fishing call the 24-hour Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

Anyone interested in fishing can [buy a fishing licence online](#)