

Close season for coarse fishing gets underway for 2022

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers that the close season for coarse fishing comes into effect today (Tuesday 15 March) and runs until 15 June inclusive. The annual close season prevents fishing for coarse fish in rivers and streams across England, helping to protect fish when they are spawning and supporting vulnerable stocks.

Throughout the close season, Environment Agency (EA) officers conduct patrols to ensure anglers respect the no fishing period. Notices have been displayed in key fishing areas across England reminding anglers of the law. As part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, Angling Trust (AT) volunteers support the EA by keeping watch on riverbanks and reporting incidents to the 24-hour incident hotline 0800 80 70 60.

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of Operation CLAMPDOWN and this year it will be officially launched on the River Tone in Taunton, Somerset. Environment Agency officers will support the launch by also undertaking a week of action from Tuesday 15th March to Sunday 20th March. Patrols will continue for the duration of the close season.

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

Every year, between March and June, our rivers start to reawaken, and our coarse fish populations will soon begin spawning. The close season aims to protect fish during this delicate time to ensure they remain healthy and resilient. Alongside our fisheries improvement work, the close season gives our fish populations the chance to recover.

Going fishing is a great way to connect with nature, relax and unwind – and we always encourage new anglers to give fishing a go. However, we are aware that not all new anglers will have knowledge of fishing rules like the close season. If you know a new angler, please remind them of the close season dates.

Anglers who do still want to get out on the banks during close season can still visit many stillwaters and canals, depending on landowner agreement, or try their hand at trout fishing, though a valid fishing licence is still required.

Nino Brancato, Angling Trust National Enforcement Support Manager, said:

After ten years the positive impact of the work of the Voluntary Bailiff Service cannot be underestimated in supporting fisheries

enforcement across England. A key part of this has been our work on Operation CLAMPDOWN.

This year's close season will offer another great opportunity for the Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and the Voluntary Bailiff Service to work closely with the Environment Agency and police during Operation CLAMPDOWN 10.

Our dedicated volunteer bailiffs will be out on patrol and taking part in coordinated joint activity around the nation's waterways in an eyes and ears capacity – gathering intelligence and reporting incidents in support of our enforcement partners as part of our multi-agency approach to protecting fish and fisheries.

The coarse fish close season applies to rivers, streams, drains and some canals, as well as certain stillwaters within specified 'sites of special scientific interest' (SSSI). The canals and SSSI stillwaters covered by the statutory close season can be found on the [national rod fishing byelaw guidance page on gov.uk](#)

The Environment Agency takes illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally should expect to be prosecuted and to face a substantial fine. Those who suspect illegal fishing should report it to the Environment Agency's incident hotline 0800 80 70 60

Further information

- 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. Information can also be reported 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 stillwaters.
- Coarse fishing is still allowed on most stillwaters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement. You can find out which stillwaters and canals still have a statutory close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area on Gov.uk.
- Enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally. Annual fishing licences are available from only £30. It's easy to buy online. We have created a new way to view your fishing licence. You can now get your licence digitally, as an email or a text message, or you can continue to get your licence card in the post. Find out more on our [fishing licence information page on gov.uk](#)
- The Environment Agency works closely with the Angling Trust as part of the Building Bridges Project to educate and integrate migrant anglers, supporting them to fish legally in local communities. You can find out more on the [Angling Trust's website](#).
- 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 [get fishing website](#) to find out about angling events, fisheries and venues
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[CMA launches investigation into recycling of cars and vans](#)

Press release

The CMA has launched an investigation into suspected anti-competitive conduct in relation to the recycling of old or written-off vehicles.



The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has reason to suspect anti-competitive behaviour has taken place involving a number of vehicle manufacturers, and some industry bodies. This conduct relates to arrangements for recycling old or written-off vehicles, specifically cars and vans, which are known in the industry as 'end-of-life vehicles' or ELVs.

ELVs are vehicles that are categorised as waste, generally due to age-related failure or accident, and regulation requires these vehicles to be disposed of in a sustainable way. Vehicle manufacturers must offer their customers a free service for recycling ELVs, a service manufacturers often outsource to third parties.

The CMA is working closely with the European Commission, which has also launched an investigation into this matter today.

Following a period of investigation and information gathering, the CMA may issue a statement of objections if it comes to the provisional view that competition law has been infringed. At this stage, no assumptions should be made about whether competition law has been broken.

This investigation reflects the CMA's commitment – outlined in its [draft](#)

[Annual Plan 2022 to 2023](#) – to prioritise promoting environmental sustainability through effective competitive markets.

Further detail of the CMA's [procedures in competition cases is available in its guidance](#), and any updates to this investigation will be made via the dedicated web page: [Suspected anti-competitive conduct in relation to the recycling of end-of-life vehicles](#).

1. The competition legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation is the Competition Act 1998. The Chapter I prohibition of the Competition Act 1998 prohibits agreements, concerted practices and decisions by associations of undertakings which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the UK or a part of it and which may affect trade within the UK or a part of it unless they are excluded or exempt.
2. The CMA will normally publish the names of the parties under investigation as soon as possible when a formal investigation is opened, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as where doing so could, in the CMA's view, prejudice a CMA investigation or an investigation of one of the CMA's enforcement partners. In this case, the CMA will not be naming the parties under investigation at this stage, but would usually do so at a later stage of the investigation, or if a statement of objections is issued.
3. There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries under the Competition Act 1998. As with all its work, the CMA will progress this investigation at pace whilst ensuring a robust and detailed review is conducted and parties' rights of defence are respected.
4. Under the CMA's leniency policy, a business that has been involved in certain types of anti-competitive conduct may be granted immunity from penalties or a significant reduction in penalty in return for reporting cartel activity and assisting the CMA with its investigation. Individuals involved in cartel activity may also be granted immunity from criminal prosecution for the cartel offence under the Enterprise Act 2002 and from director disqualification. The CMA also operates a rewards policy under which it may pay a financial reward of up to £100,000 in return for information which helps it to identify and take action against illegal cartels. For more information on the [CMA's leniency policy](#) and the [CMA's informant reward policy](#).
5. Anyone who has information about a cartel is encouraged to call the CMA cartels hotline on 020 3738 6888 or email cartelshotline@cma.gov.uk.
6. All enquiries from journalists should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

7. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.

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[British Embassy and local community combat climate change together](#)

World news story

The British Embassy in Ashgabat worked with local volunteers to plant 80 trees.



British Embassy staff were delighted to join friends and volunteers from the local community to celebrate the arrival of spring together by planting over 80 trees outside the Embassy. Those helping with this climate change initiative included Ashgabat youth groups, members of the Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities, and Public Organisation Yenme. British Ambassador Lucia Wilde said:

It was a real pleasure to work side-by-side with the future generation of the country, all of us equally contributing to make a difference to the major challenge facing our planet. It was a pleasure and a privilege to meet such talented, friendly and dedicated young people and I look forward to meeting them again.

Climate change affects us all. We can all take steps to address the problem. Even planting and looking after a single tree will help in the fight against climate change.

A single tree can absorb as much as 22kg of carbon each year, potentially keeping it locked up in its wood and roots for decades or even centuries to come. On average, one tree produces almost 118kg of oxygen every year.

We hope that our small efforts will help supplement tree planting programmes and other national actions planned across Turkmenistan to tackle climate change.

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[Frankie Smith has prison sentence increased](#)

News story

The mother of Star Hobson has had her sentence increased after the Attorney General referred her case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.



The mother of Star Hobson has had her prison term increased after the Attorney General, the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP referred her original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Frankie Smith was convicted of causing or allowing the death of her 16-month-old daughter, Star Hobson. Star Hobson was murdered by Frankie Smith's partner, Savannah Brockhill on 22 September 2020.

On 15 December 2021, Frankie Smith was sentenced at Bradford Crown Court to 8 years' detention. At the same hearing, Savannah Brockhill was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 25 years for the murder of Star Hobson.

The Attorney General referred Frankie Smith's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme. On 15 March the Court of

Appeal found her original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 12 years' detention.

Speaking after the judgment, the Attorney General said:

This is a tragic and extremely upsetting case and my thoughts are with all those who loved Star Hobson. This case involved prolonged cruelty and neglect, deliberate disregard, and a failure to take any steps to protect or seek assistance for her before and after her murder. No sentence can reverse this tragedy, but I welcome the decision to reflect the gravity of this offending by increasing the sentence today.

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[Scottish Secretary responds to March Labour Market Statistics](#)

News story

As new ONS figures show Scotland's unemployment rate decreasing, Scottish Secretary Alister Jack says the UK Government is continuing to help people into work.



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

“There are some encouraging signs in today's employment figures, and while we should not be complacent, our economy is proving resilient.

“The UK Government is helping people right across the country get into work and progress. This is part of our vision to level up all parts of the UK, driving economic growth and creating opportunities for everyone.”

Background

Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that Scotland's unemployment rate has decreased by 0.3 percentage points compared with the previous quarter. Scotland's labour market has strengthened over the past 12 months, with the employment rate at 74.1 per cent.

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