

Press release: Man fined after pleading guilty to fishing offences

Christopher Myers, 27, of Surrey Place, Willington, Crook, appeared before Newton Aycliffe Magistrates Court on Wednesday 4 July where he pleaded guilty to fishing using illegal equipment, killing and being in possession of trout about to spawn.

He was ordered to pay a total of £1,180, which includes a fine of £800, costs of £300 and a victim surcharge of £80.

The offence happened at 2100 on 21 November last year when Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were carrying out patrols at Waskerley Beck, Wolsingham.

They observed three men on the beck. Myers was at the water's edge shining a torch into the water and carrying a large gaff – a one meter long metal hook – with a number of fish impaled upon it. A second man was wearing a headlamp torch and the other was carrying a landing net that contained a number of fish.

After officers made themselves known to the poachers, all three ran, dropping the fish and equipment. Myers was caught and arrested while his accomplices escaped. Four dead trout were found in Myers nearby vehicle.



Seized equipment and eggs web

During a voluntary interview at the scene, Myers denied taking any fish, stating that he didn't know who the other men were, that he did not know how the fish got into his pick up and that he was not the driver that night.

Officers found a total of 13 dead sea trout, 11 of which were females ready to spawn. Between them, they were carrying around 35,000 eggs. Their loss could have a major impact on future sea trout stocks in the River Wear.

In mitigation, Myers stated he didn't know how serious these offences were and said he was very sorry.

The Environment Agency's Kevin Summerson said: "This level of illegal activity could have a serious impact on the sustainability of future stocks of sea trout in the River Wear. That's why we take reports of suspected poaching seriously and work closely with the police to take action where appropriate. We're pleased the court has also recognised seriousness of the crime in sentencing.

"At this time of year salmon and sea trout are returning to rivers to spawn and protecting returning fish is vital to maintaining a healthy fish population.

"We'll continue to target all aspects of illegal fishing activity, particularly where serious illegal and potentially damaging methods are used."

The court also ordered the forfeiture of all seized items: gaff, net, torches and fish.

Under the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, lights are prohibited, as are gaffs, and landing nets if used without an authorised rod and line. It is also illegal to fish during the close season for migratory fish.

Anyone discovered committing offences could face a substantial fine and imprisonment. The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

You can buy a licence at <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences> and don't forget that all fishing licence income is used to fund work to protect, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. If you want to fish a new river this season, why not visit the [fishinginfo](https://www.fishinginfo.co.uk) website to find details of different venues, river levels and angling clubs.

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It's been an inspiring year for the Coal Authority as we've continued to grow and transform into an organisation that's increasingly sustainable to enable us to deliver our next 5 year plan.

Our next plan is an evolution of the strategy we've followed over the last 5 years. It balances a strong focus on core operational delivery to keep people safe and improve environments impacted by the UK's mining legacy with a continued clear focus on innovation and continuous improvement. This enables us reduce costs to the taxpayer, support and develop our people and ensure we sustain the specialist skills we need to deliver for the future.

Over the past year we've worked to:

- grow our customer base, diversify our income and make significant progress in saving costs through innovation
- adapt and respond to major events, including flooding, and significant subsidence events
- enable a mining reports market, and seen competition develop in line with our business plan
- respond to our customers' needs, launching a new report for consultants and conveyancers

- develop our mine related services to enable those in government, infrastructure and development sectors to manage risk and cost
- support the development of ochre, a by-product of our mine water treatment, as a fine art product
- engage with water industry partners to examine various opportunities for water including co-treatment, supply and drought alleviation

We've contributed to the delivery of the UK's Industrial Strategy by adopting solar power at some of our mine water treatment schemes and by evaluating the clean energy potential stored in our mine workings.

We're proud of the progress we've made this last year. We are more relevant now than at any other time in our 24 year history, managing more social, economic and environmental impacts across an even broader range of customers.

Discover more about us, our work and our plans for the future.

[Coal Authority annual report and accounts 2017-18](#)

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Press release: Government leads energy charge across public sector, saving up to £320 million

At a speech celebrating the Northern Powerhouse in Newcastle today (Thursday 5 July), the Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark announced a range of measures to place the UK at the forefront of the global shift towards clean growth as part of our [Industrial Strategy](#).

Following a speech by the Prime Minister last month, Greg Clark outlined how the government will deliver the Clean Growth Grand Challenge's first 'mission' to halve the energy use of new buildings by 2030, saving families money.

Building on the momentum of ambitious energy efficiency measures within the public sector, the Secretary of State announced that central government will work towards a more stretching target with a reduction of 43% greenhouse gas emissions by 2019 to 2020 compared to 2009 to 2010 levels, potentially delivering £340 million in savings. We will also be publishing guidance on targets for the wider public and higher education sectors.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Our new, ambitious target for reducing emission across our central estate shows how this government is continuing to lead the world and rise to the challenge of tackling climate change. We have made significant progress so far, meeting our previous target 3 years early and saving just over £100 million last financial year as a result.

The potential savings from this can make a big difference across the wider public sector, with the NHS saving £2 billion over the last decade; money that can be put straight back into frontline services where it's needed most.

Industry energy efficiency

We need to revolutionise the way we heat our homes and businesses, to support this, the Business Secretary announced that government will be launching the £18 million Industrial Heat Recovery Support programme with applications invited in the autumn. This is intended to encourage industry to invest in heat recovery technologies, harnessing the power of heat which would otherwise go to waste to help improve the efficiency of industry and reduce costs.

Speaking today, Greg Clark said:

Of the more than £11 trillion investment expected in global power in the next three decades, 86% – is expected to be in low carbon. And by 2040, electric vehicles could make up over half of global car sales, compared to 1% today.

We will be working with businesses to highlight these opportunities during the first ever annual Green GB Week starting on the 15 October.

The Business Secretary also launched the [Construction Sector Deal](#) will bring together the construction, manufacturing, energy and digital sectors to deliver innovative approaches that improve productivity in construction and accelerate a shift to building safer, healthier and more affordable places to live and learn that use less energy.

Notes to editors

1. The [Greening Government Commitments](#) require central government departments to adopt sustainable practices, including greenhouse gas emissions.
2. We have announced a new target to reduce emissions by 43% by 2020, compared with 2009/2010 levels. This has the potential to deliver savings of £340 million in 2020 compared to a 2009/2010 baseline.
3. The previous target for government, as a whole, was to reduce emissions by 32% by 2019/2020, compared with 2009/2010 levels. This was exceeded 3 years early with a 33% reduction by the end of 2016/2017, resulting in a saving of £104 million in 2016/2017 compared to the 2009/2010 baseline.
4. We are also publishing guidance for wider public and higher education sectors to report against a voluntary target of more than 30% reduction in emissions by 2020/2021: [Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020: emissions reporting in public and higher education sectors](#)
5. The [Industrial Heat Recovery Programme](#) will open for applications in Autumn 2018.
6. The [successful applicants from the two £10 million innovation competitions](#) include northern companies such as Free Running Buildings in Leeds who are pioneering low energy ventilation technology, and Hull University who will develop a high efficiency, low carbon heating system for public buildings in Yorkshire.