

Catch! Portsmouth fisherman netted without licence

An angler from Portsmouth who fished illegally has been ordered by a court to pay out nearly 100 times the amount of money than if he'd just bought a rod licence.

Dawid Rudzki was caught fishing without the licence in May last year at Sinah Lake, on Hayling Island.

A bailiff carrying out licence checks for Portsmouth and District Angling Society, which uses the lake, saw society member Rudzki didn't have permission to fish with a rod. The bailiff reported the matter to the Environment Agency, which successfully pursued Rudzki through the courts.

Rudzki denied the charge, but the 47-year-old was fined £250 by magistrates. He could have bought a single-day rod licence to fish for just £6. Instead, his bill for not doing so, including costs, was almost £600.

Kye Jerrom, a senior enforcement officer with the Environment Agency, said:

The eagle-eyed bailiff at Sinah Lake was instrumental in bringing this case to court. Making sure anglers followed club rules ended with Rudzki's conviction. An excellent example of a fishing club official making sure members pay their way, vital to helping the Environment Agency protect fisheries.

Around £25 million is raised annually through fishing licences, paying for stocking waters with half-a-million fish, and improving rivers and fisheries for anglers and the wider environment. It's quick, easy and cheap to get a licence: online, by phone and at the Post Office – search 'fishing licence' on gov.uk.

Our fisheries enforcement officers carry out regular checks on private lakes, rivers, ponds and canals – anywhere that can be fished. Information on suspected illegal fishing can be called into our incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60.

Anglers aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water need a licence. An annual licence starts at £30. Concessions are available, and junior licences are free for 13-to-16-year-olds.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all-year-round, supported by police forces and the Angling Trust, as well as fishing clubs and societies.

Dawid Rudzki, of Gladys Road, in Portsmouth, pleaded not guilty to fishing without a rod licence at Sinah Lake, on Hayling Island, on 18 May 2021,

contrary to section 27 (1) (a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

He was convicted in absentia at Portsmouth magistrates' court on 12 July 2022, fined £250, and ordered to pay costs of £300 and a victim surcharge of £34.