

Chesterfield man nets £431 penalty for fishing without a licence

The case was brought to Northampton Magistrates Court on 5 August 2019 where Bradley Topham from North Crescent, Duckmanton pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay a total penalty of £431.

An annual fishing licence would have cost him just £30.

The penalty includes a fine of £266 plus costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £30 after Mr Topham was found in breach of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975) on 12 May at Harlesthorne Dam, Clowne

Following the verdict, James Anderson, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency, said:

The case shows how seriously the courts take these offences and acts as a reminder to anglers of the importance of having a fishing licence. We hope it will provide a deterrent to any angler who is thinking of fishing without a licence.

We would also like to remind anglers who wish to buy their licence online of the importance of buying their fishing licence directly from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) as they will receive a reference number allowing them to go fishing on the same day.

Customers who use third party sites may be charged more and might not get added to the official database as quickly.

Every year across the country, thousands of anglers are prosecuted for not having a fishing licence. As well as cheating other anglers, fishing illegally can carry a hefty penalty. Getting caught without a licence could land a fine of up to £2,500.

Income from fishing licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A 1-day licence costs from just £6 and an annual licence costs from just £30 (concessions available). They are free for those aged 13 to 16. Licences are available online or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where

illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency Incident Hotline 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.