

# Press release: Three fined for illegal fishing in the North East

Three people from Teesside have been fined a total of almost £1,500 after Environment Agency officers on Bank Holiday boat patrol with Cleveland Police caught them fishing illegally.

Maria Blyth, 30, and Adam Wakefield, 33, of Newtown Avenue in Stockton, were both fined a total of £270 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing without a licence, fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

In a separate case Thomas Stocker, 25, of Laurel Road in Stockton, was fined £440 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47 and a victim surcharge of £30 for fishing during the coarse fishing close season, and using bait prohibited during the close season.

Their cases were proved in their absence at Hull Magistrates' Court on 9 August.

On Bank Holiday weekend, Saturday 5 May, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers were on boat patrol with Cleveland Police on the River Tees, upstream of the Tees Barrage, when they saw Blyth and Wakefield fishing at Bowesfield.

They saw Stocker fishing separately on the same stretch of river.

The fishing close season prevents fishing for coarse fish for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed. It runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive.

## **Regular partnership work**

David Shears, from the Environment Agency's Fisheries Enforcement Team in the North East, said:

These boat patrols are part of the regular partnership work we do with the police to combat both rural and urban fisheries and other environmental crime.

Combining forces in this way allows us to target crime effectively and efficiently in locations where land-based patrols don't allow for easy access.

The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders. This is another example of how working with our partners results in successful court action.

The Environment Agency urges people to report illegal fishing as quickly as

possible by calling the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs from just £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are [available online](#)

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## **Press release: £600 fine for man found fishing without a licence near Doncaster**

A 28-year old man from Rotherham, has been successfully prosecuted after being found guilty of fishing without a licence and providing false details to an officer in April 2018.

The case was brought to Hull & Holderness Magistrates Court by the Environment Agency on 9 August 2018, where Simon Carr, of Pear Tree Avenue, Bramley, Rotherham was found guilty and ordered to pay a total penalty of almost £600.

The penalty includes a fine of £440 plus costs of £127 and a victim surcharge of £30 after Simon Carr was found in breach of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975) on 29 April 2018 at Banks End Fisheries in Blaxton, Westwoodside, near Doncaster.

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

The case acts as a reminder to anglers of the importance of having a fishing licence. We hope it will also provide a deterrent to any angler who is thinking of fishing without a licence or providing false details to an officer. Although the angler initially gave us false details, we were quickly able to trace him through a check of his car registration. The case also shows anglers how seriously the courts take these offences.

All of the money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, benefitting anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

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.

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). Licences are available from [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

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

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## **Press release: Make it your business to be flood resilient**

The Environment Agency has launched a campaign to ensure North East businesses are prepared for flooding.

Since 1998 there has been at least one serious flood every year with businesses more likely to flood than be destroyed by fire.

And with recent events such as 2012's 'Thunder Thursday' hitting businesses hard the Environment Agency is working with them to reduce the impact of a flood.

The campaign launches with an event in Yarm next week and will culminate with an event in North Shields in October.

The Environment Agency's four Flood Resilience Community Engagement Officers for the region have already been in touch with more than 700 business across the region to raise awareness of flooding issues – more than 100 in Tyne and Wear, more than 500 in Durham and Darlington and more than 90 in Cleveland.

In Northumberland, the team worked with seven businesses during a drop-in about a potential flood scheme at Hexham Industrial Estate and 18 businesses attended a drop-in event at Prudhoe.

### **'It will never happen to me'**

Taryn Al-mashgari, Community Engagement Officer for Tyne and Wear, said:

A common phrase I hear when out visiting businesses is 'it will never happen to me'. Some aren't even aware they are trading in an area at risk of flooding. Flooding accounts for 33% of all losses to business property. This has a huge impact on our economy.

With climate change meaning extreme weather events becoming frequent and more severe in the future it's more important than ever that businesses are prepared.

Most businesses can save between 20% and 90% on the cost of lost stock and moveable equipment by taking action now, before winter. For every £1 spent preparing for flooding £5 is saved – this is money well spent.

- The campaign launches with a 'Business Breakfast' drop-in event in Yarm which takes place at Yarm Fellowship Hall between 7.30am-9am on Wednesday 22 August.

Businesses can come along and talk to Sarah Duffy, Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland, about their experiences of flooding and she will be helping them understand how to prepare for a flood, create a business flood group and ensure the safety of staff and customers during a flood event. Refreshments will be provided.

- This will be followed up by a community drop-in event at Redcar and Cleveland Leisure and Community Heart on Friday 24 August between 10am and 12noon.

And in October, the campaign will culminate with a big event for businesses at North Shields Fish Quay. Taryn added:

The impact of 'Thunder Thursday' on businesses across the country was estimated to be £200million, that's an extraordinary figure. There's lots that businesses can do to reduce the impact.

Things businesses can do to make them more resilient to flooding:

1. Understand the different types of flooding. Flooding can happen from the coast, river, surface water, sewer and groundwater.
2. Check their flood risk. Businesses can check if they are at risk of flooding from rivers, the coast and surface water.
3. Check they have the right level of insurance.
4. Write a flood plan.
5. Invest in flood protection measures and link up with neighbouring properties.

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## Press release: Light aircraft used to target illegal abstraction investigations

The Environment Agency in the East Midlands is the first area in the country to use digital imaging collected by light aircraft to put a stop to illegal abstractions from rivers and streams.

The information obtained from the operation is now helping the Environment Agency to effectively target high invasion areas and carry out targeted abstraction patrols to catch illegal abstractors and put a stop to illegal abstraction that can cause harm to the environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency manages abstraction to balance the needs of the environment with the rights of existing lawful water users during periods of dry weather.

93 abstraction licences in the East Midlands have had restrictions placed on them in the last few weeks to reduce abstractions and 16 licence holders have been told to cease abstracting completely.

To ensure abstractors are complying with the new restrictions, Environment Officers will be carrying out high visibility patrols throughout the East Midlands to check that abstractors keep within the conditions of their licence and do not cause harm to the environment.

Steve Lawrie, Area Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Our patrols across the East Midlands aim to deter illegal abstraction and identify compliance issues where restrictions are in force, or where we are aware of environmental issues.

We are working to be flexible where possible and allow abstraction where it will not cause harm to the environment or impact other river users. We must balance the needs of farmers and other businesses with those of wildlife and other water users.

As the hot, dry weather continues we are urging everyone to use water wisely to help protect the environment and prevent the need for further water restrictions.

Anyone suspected of abstracting illegally should be reported to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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## Press release: Flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes to be tested on 24 August

The Environment Agency (EA) is conducting its annual test of its flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes on Friday, 24 August.

Installed after the summer floods of 2007, 17 of the 18 sirens help the EA warn over 25,000 households and local businesses of imminent tidal flooding while one also warns of flood risk from the river.

Testing will take place on Friday, 24 August between 10am and 12pm. If you hear the sirens during this time, you do not need to take any action. If flooding is expected on the day, the test will be rescheduled and flood warnings will be issued through the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service (FWS).

Environment Agency staff will be at Freshney Place shopping centre in Grimsby together with representatives from North East Lincolnshire Council between 9am and 5pm on the day of the tests. They'll be on hand to answer questions about the sirens and provide information about how to manage your flood risk, including what steps you can take to prepare for an emergency.

The sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes were installed over a decade ago, and since then the Environment Agency has made great strides in how it can warn people when flooding may be possible. The EA now offers a free Flood Warning Service, which provides targeted flood warnings via phone call, text or email. The EA encourages all residents in Grimsby and Cleethorpes to check their flood risk and sign up for flood warnings if they've not done so yet, by visiting [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings) or by calling 0345 988 1188.

Although the Flood Warning Service is now the EA's primary warning tool, the flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes add value as they can help provide people with crucial time to prepare for flooding. The siren on the Willows Estate in Grimsby is used to warn residents about flooding from the New Cut Drain and the River Freshney, while the others warn of flooding from the Humber.

Greg Smith, Flood Resilience team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

The flood sirens we own and operate in Grimsby and Cleethorpes help us warn over 25,000 households and local businesses. It's important that we conduct these annual tests to make sure the sirens still work as they should.

Although our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding to thousands of homes and businesses in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, we can never remove the risk of flooding entirely. This is why it is crucial that we can warn people when there is a risk of flooding, by using tools such as the sirens or our free Flood Warning Service.

It is important that everyone plays their part to protect themselves from the risk of flooding. Find out what you can do to protect yourself and your family by coming to talk to us at Freshney Place on 24 August.

Cllr Matt Patrick, portfolio holder for the environment with North East Lincolnshire Council said:

On the flood siren testing day, North East Lincolnshire Council staff and its partner Engie will be joining the Environment Agency in Freshney Place Shopping Centre between 9am and 5pm.

Officers will be available to answer any questions on flood risk and how you can prepare.