

# Press release: Three men fined for illegal fishing

Three men have been ordered to pay fines and costs totalling more than £1,300 for poaching with illegal fishing nets in the River Derwent in Gateshead.

Scott McGuire, 30, of Beach Road, South Shields, appeared at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court on Thursday 24 May, where he pleaded guilty to using gill nets to catch fish at Durham Bank, Rowlands Gill. He was fined £120, ordered to pay £300 costs and a victim surcharge of £30.

Stuart Ashall, 45, also of Beach Road, appeared previously on 4 January for the same offence where he pleaded guilty and was fined £180, ordered to pay £400 in costs and a victim surcharge of £30.

A third man, John Britten, 34, of Belgrave Road in South Shields, had also previously pleaded guilty to the same offence and was fined £45, ordered to pay costs of £200 and a victim surcharge of £30 at a court hearing on 8 November last year.

Gill nets are designed to catch fish by their gills and are rarely licensed in rivers due to their indiscriminate nature and the fact that fish caught in the nets will usually suffocate and die.

## **Illegal gill net**

Representing the Environment Agency, solicitor Chris Bunting told the court that Environment Agency enforcement officers were patrolling the River Derwent on 22 July 2016, looking for people fishing illegally.

At 12.40pm they came across a tent with the three men asleep, two inside and one outside. In the river next to them was a gill net set across the river. There was also a salmon head on the ground.

The men said the net had been there when they arrived and they had got the salmon from a supermarket.

However, investigations from a fisheries expert concluded the remains were of an adult wild migratory salmon which had been subject to physical trauma before death and exposed to the natural environment post death. A fish bought from a supermarket would be farmed.

Two of the men attended for voluntary interviews on 8 August, 2016, where they said they did not know there was a net in the river until the enforcement officers had pointed it out, adding they had met some strangers on the riverbank the night before, who spoke to them before leaving. They reiterated the salmon was from a supermarket.

## **Net is extremely damaging**

Following the case David Shears, Senior Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

The River Derwent is a recovering river that had been previously affected by industry but which has been slowly improving.

Water quality has improved drastically and a fish pass has been installed in Blaydon which has resulted in fish returning and repopulating the river system.

Gill nets such as the one used in this case are designed to catch fish by their gills and can be extremely damaging to fish stocks. Illegal fishing like this can have a devastating impact, especially on recovering rivers such as the Derwent.

We're committed to tackling illegal fishing of all kinds and we'll continue to work closely with police and angling clubs, supported by the Angling Trust, to target those flouting the law and take enforcement action.

All income from rod 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.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – [you can buy them online](#)

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

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## **Press release: Illegal fishing clampdown throughout East Midlands**

[Environment Agency](#) enforcement officers in Nottinghamshire will be patrolling waters throughout the East Midlands this bank holiday weekend (26 to 28 May 2018) as part of a clampdown on illegal fishing.

The officers will be making sure anyone fishing is obeying the law. They'll be checking that people are not fishing in waters closed to anglers, are using the right tackle and equipment, and have a valid fishing licence.

## **Fish legally this bank holiday**

Bank holiday weekends are a great opportunity for families to get out and do some fishing on waterways and the Environment Agency is keen to ensure everyone is enjoying themselves and doing the right thing.

In April this year, enforcement officers checked 1,074 anglers, with the majority being fully licensed and compliant. In that period, officers reported 31 people for offences. During the last May bank holiday weekend, 530 anglers were checked and 30 people were reported for offences.

Callum Underhill, fisheries enforcement officer at the Environment Agency, said:

We will once again be out and about around the county this bank holiday to make sure everyone is fishing legally. Anyone caught breaking the law can expect to face prosecution.

We regularly carry out enforcement operations in order to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. We take all kinds of illegal fishing extremely seriously, whether it's fishing without a licence, using illegal equipment or fishing in the close season.

Illegal fishing is not just unfair on other anglers who fish within the law, it also endangers the future of the sport by damaging the sustainability of fish stocks, so it is important for people to report to us any information about suspected illegal fishing so we can investigate.

## **Officers to target hotspots**

The Environment Agency's work is intelligence-led and officers work closely with partners to target known hotspots and act on reports of illegal fishing.

Anglers are reminded that it is currently the close season for coarse fishing, so fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted. This is to protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future. Anglers are encouraged to check which waterways are open to fishing by [reading their area's byelaws](#).

## **Investing in fish**

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries, and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, including protecting stocks, restoring fish stocks through re-stocking, eradicating invasive species, and making fish habitat improvements. Fishing licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual

licence costs from just £30 and is [available online](#).

People are urged to report illegal fishing to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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## [Notice: WS11 1SG, Range Farm Limited: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Range Farm Limited
  - Installation name: Range Farm
  - Permit number: EPR/KP3939YX/A001
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## **National Statistics: Monthly sea fisheries statistics March 2018**

The monthly landings statistics will be released at 9.30am on the 4th Friday of each month, or the next working day if this is a bank holiday.