

News story: Fish merchant fined for fisheries offences

Geoffrey Blake, trading as Ventnor Haven Fisheries in the Isle of Wight, was sentenced at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court on 11 December 2017 in a prosecution brought by the MMO.

The court heard how the company, a registered buyer of first sale fish, failed to submit 369 sales notes in either electronic or paper form to the MMO within 48 hrs of the landing taking place between 25 February 2016 and 1 September 2017.

Mr Blake pleaded not guilty but was convicted by the court and ordered to pay a fine of £500, costs of £500 and a victim surcharge of £50.

A spokesperson for the MMO said:

The requirement to submit sales notes within 48 hours enables the MMO to gain an accurate picture of fish stocks on which to base its fisheries management decisions.

When, as in this case, sales notes are not submitted that picture becomes partial, distorted or inaccurate. This prosecution shows that the MMO will take the appropriate enforcement action to prevent such a situation occurring.

Press release: Environment Agency offers stocking fillers for anglers

The Environment Agency is getting into the festive spirit by providing stocking fillers for anglers as its staff restock rivers with thousands of fish in the run up to Christmas.

Calverton fish farm, the Environment Agency's specialist fish breeding farm in Nottingham, produces between 400,000 and 500,000 fish each year. The farm breeds nine species of fish including Chub, Dace, Barbel, Roach, Bream, Crucians, Rudd, Tench and Grayling. The restocking activity is part of an annual programme, funded by income from rod licence sales.

Alan Henshaw, fisheries team leader at the Environment Agency said:

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and concerted restocking from Calverton has accelerated the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

New techniques in Pond Rearing have delivered significant improvements in the average size of the 18 month-old fish and many rivers and lakes throughout England have benefited from these stockings. The quality and range of fish produced as part of the restocking programme is testament to the hard work of the staff at Calverton farm.

All of this work is funded by money from rod licence sales to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.”

Some notable stockings that will take place:

- 34,781 mixed Chub, Dace and Roach stocked into the River Leadon in Gloucestershire.
- 29,750 mixed fish stocked into Rivers, Canals and Stillwaters across Cumbria and Lancashire in the North West.
- 600 Barbel into the River Dearne in South Yorkshire.
- 21,000 Roach, Bream, Crucians and Tench stocked into still waters and 7,600 Chub, Dace and Barbel stocked across rivers in Thames region.
- 6,400 fish comprising of 6 different species split between the River Wid, Blackwater and Colne in Anglian East region.
- 4,250 Roach, Bream and Tench into the Blind Yeo in Wessex plus more than 3,000 additional fish split into other waters in the area.

More stockings will continue into the New Year.

Restocking of England's Rivers and Lakes by the Environment Agency happens for a number of reasons. This may be following a pollution incident where the original population has been lost, where recruitment is poor or in the creation of brand-new fisheries and Angling opportunities.

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SRUC appoints new Director of Finance

Scotland's Rural College is pleased to announce the appointment of its new Director of Finance.

News story: New Blue Belt stakeholder newsletter published

The [Winter 2017-2018 Stakeholder Newsletter](#) provides an update on a number of recent work projects that are being undertaken as part of the [Blue Belt programme](#).

The Blue Belt programme is a four year programme (2016 to 2020), delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) with the UK Overseas Territories on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

You can sign up to receive the [newsletter by e-mail](#) and get more updates about the work of the programme [on Twitter @ukgovbluebelt](#)