

# Press release: 8 anglers face combined fines of over £5,600 for fishing illegally in Staffordshire

On 20 February 2017, North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court issued a total of £5,680 in fines to 8 anglers caught fishing illegally last summer.

All 8 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on regular patrols, and with an annual rod licence costing £27, these anglers have really been left out of pocket.

Matthew Bamford of Werrington Road in Stoke on Trent, Ricky Fisher of Millfield Road in Walsall, Mark Francis of Sefton Park Road in Liverpool, Robbie Johnson of High Street in Laurencekirk, Carl Johnson of Cowlshaw Way in Rugeley, Anthony Leese of Dawlish Drive in Stoke on Trent, Blain Pickering of Community Drive in Stoke on Trent, and Richie Wilkes of Nash Peake Street in Stoke on Trent, were all found guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that on 3 separate days last June and July, Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Stoke on Trent, Rugeley, Eccleshall and Penkridge.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With an annual licence costing £27 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Rod licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from rod 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 from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence if you are aged 12 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

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## **British Ambassador in Panama visits Oatridge**

SRUC's Oatridge Campus recently hosted a high profile diplomatic visitor – Dr Ian Collard, British Ambassador in Panama.

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## **Policy paper: River Thames Scheme: Berkshire and Surrey discussion group workshops (December 2016)**

*Updated:* Summary reports added,

Discussions from the River Thames Scheme resident groups.

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## **Policy paper: River Thames Scheme: discussion group workshop, Walton Bridge to Richmond (November 2016)**

Discussions from the River Thames Scheme group workshops.

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# News story: Marine Management Organisation (MMO) issue authorisations to catch bass

*Updated:* Date changed from 14 to 21 March 2017

In order to protect bass stocks and the sustainability of the wider marine environment from 22 February 2017 the MMO will be issuing letters to fishermen who, based on their track records, have authorisation to catch bass. The MMO will also send letters to those who do not have such authorisation.

The letters include details of a representation process through which fishermen can, on limited grounds, provide evidence to the MMO should they wish to challenge the authorisation decisions which have been made. The deadline for such representations is 21 March 2017.

The MMO action is a response to Article 9(2) of Council Regulation (EU) 2017/127 which fixed the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters in 2017.

[Read the bass fishing guidance.](#)

Phil Haslam (MMO Director of Operations) said:

“The bass authorisations help implement EC measures designed to manage effort in order to help protect and improve Bass stocks.

I would urge fishermen to read the letters they receive and familiarise themselves with the bass regulations and the representation process. Those that feel they meet the representation criteria and can provide the relevant evidence should do so at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the 21 March 2017 deadline”.

Full details of the [bass regulations and the representation process](#) have been published on the [MMO website](#).

Assistance is also available via [MMO coastal offices](#).