

London anglers net bags of convictions

- Fishing without a licence has cost 4 anglers from London over £2,179
- All cases were heard at Barkingside Magistrates Court on 12 November 2022
- The Environment Agency carries out fisheries enforcement work all-year-round

Between the 4 fishermen, the total costs amount to be paid in fines is 70 times the amount of money than if they'd just bought an annual fishing licence or 360 times more than a single £6 day fishing licence.

Oprea-Mihai Sali, of Brent, London, was caught fishing without a fishing licence and during the close season on 8 May at Brent Reservoir in London.

Laurie Le Beaufay, of Coventry, West Midlands, was caught fishing without a fishing licence. He was additionally fined for not declaring his name and address to an Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer on 3 June at Thorney Weir Lakes.

Darren Lightfoot, of Merton, London was caught fishing without a fishing licence and during the close season on 2 June on the River Wandle, near Deen City Farm, Morden.

Gheorghe Papancea, of Hendon, London, was caught fishing without a fishing licence and during the close season on 20 March and 8 May at Brent Reservoir in London.

Following a case brought by the Environment Agency, Barkingside Magistrates court have ordered the 4 men a combined total of £1,460 fines, £540 in costs and £179 victim surcharges.

The close season is in place to allow an uninterrupted spawning period and helps to protect vulnerable species. It also provides an opportunity for the Environment Agency and partners to carry out projects up and down the country. To further enhance habitats vital for improving fish spawning.

Kye Jerrom, a senior enforcement officer with the Environment Agency, said:

These cases demonstrate that we pursue offenders through the courts and won't hesitate to take enforcement action where anglers break rules.

The money raised through the sales of fishing licences is re-invested and enables us to improve all fisheries, including rivers, for anglers. Anyone found fishing illegally may face prosecution and a fine of up to £2,500.

Our fisheries enforcement officers routinely carry out licence checks, and we urge anyone with information about illegal fishing

to contact us on 0800 807060.

Around £25 million is raised annually through fishing licences. This money pays for stocking waters with half a million fish, and improving rivers and fisheries for anglers and the wider environment.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence to fish. A 1-day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence currently costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 to 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence 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, supported by police forces and the Angling Trust, as well as fishing clubs and societies.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 807060 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.