

New equipment to help combat illegal fishing

The new kit, which cost over £15,000, consists of a high grade digital SLR camera, night vision monocular and night vision binoculars. It will allow officers to carry out more regular patrols and make night checks for illegal fishing in the Great Ouse and Fenland catchment area more effective.

The technology was funded by Defra's Water and Environment Improvement Fund, which is used to enhance fisheries and the environment as part of Defra's 25 Year Environment plan.

Alex Thomson, fisheries enforcement officer for the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

The new kit will enhance our detection and surveillance capabilities. Combined with our specialist training and specific powers, the technology will allow us to cover more ground, get better evidence, and work more effectively into and through the hours of darkness.

This is invaluable in detecting and preventing illegal poaching activities, and protecting our valuable coarse fish and eel stocks.

Fisheries officers have the power to arrest and detain, enter lands, stop and search, seize boats, vessels, vehicles and instruments and require the production of fishing licences. Those caught can be given a range of punishments, including fines of up to £2,500.

To report any illegal fishing activity, call our 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

To buy a fishing licence, [visit our fishing page](#)