

Press release: Environment Agency unveils new fishing licence images

To the delight of the country's anglers, the Environment Agency has revealed today that Clarissa the Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) – for 28 years a UK record weighing Carp – will be represented on the front of the Environment Agency's fishing coarse & trout licence.

Clarissa was chosen to mark the centenary birth of renowned angler Richard "Dick" Walker, who, on 13 September 1952, landed a carp of 44lb which beat the previous record by nearly 13lb. The fish, caught from Redmire Pool, was taken to London Zoo aquarium.

In the 1950's fish were routinely killed to establish their weight and often put in a glass cases. Walker hated the idea of killing such a magnificent creature and persuaded the aquarium's curator to take her on. She was there named Clarissa the Carp – although Dick Walker himself called her Ravioli.

The choice for this year's image will be welcomed by coarse fish anglers who have campaigned for Walker's contribution to angling to be acknowledged. His record catch stood until 1980 when it was beaten by a fish of 51½ lb from the same water. As the inventor of 'Arlesey bomb' angling weight, the first electronic bite alarms and because of his involvement in the development of carbon fibre fishing rods, he is considered a pioneer.

This year's image will be a carp and was designed by renowned angling and wildlife artist, David Miller. The other fishing licence images unveiled today are the gudgeon (*Gobio gobio*) and the salmon (*Salmo salar*).

Sales of fishing licences for the 2016/17 season raised £21 million. The money was used to restock rivers with 6,335,000 fish, encourage over 35,000 people to try angling for the first time and bring 2,330 successful prosecutions against crimes like poaching.

Kevin Austin, Director of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

We're delighted to reveal these new images as part of our continued drive to encourage people to give fishing a go. All the money raised from rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries benefiting anglers.

David Miller, the artist who designed the rod licence, said:

Designing this year's fishing licence combines 2 of my passions: fishing and art. The Environment Agency does a fantastic job and I'm proud to be supporting rod licence sales with my artwork. It's been great to be able to capture a fish that has such historical

significance in the fishing world.

Mike Heylin OBE Chairman British Record (Rod Caught) Fish Committee added:

This is a fine tribute to a fish and an angler who changed our perspective and excited a whole generation of anglers, many of whom will hold this licence with pride.

The fishing licence lasts for 12 months from the day it is bought, rather than expiring at the end of March each year. People are required to buy a fishing licence in order to fish legally in England, Wales and along the Border Esk in Scotland.

Anyone fishing illegally is cheating other licence paying anglers and can expect to be prosecuted and face a substantial fine. In 2016/ 2017 the Environment Agency checked 63,000 rod licences and prosecuted 2,795 anglers for fishing without a licence. Anyone can buy a fishing licence online from GOV.UK

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