

Protect fish by staying with your rod at all times

Anglers are being reminded to remain by their fishing rods at all times to prevent fish deaths particularly pike.

Leaving a baited fishing rod unguarded breaks a byelaw and puts the species in danger, it can also land you with a fine.

If a pike takes the bait and the angler doesn't react fast enough, it can result in the fish becoming deeply hooked, which often results in death.

To help protect pike stocks, Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers have been conducting regular boat patrols to target illegal fishing activity.

Steve Lane, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said: "We recently responded to a call to our incident hotline from a concerned angler who had noticed some fishing rods left by the River Bure.

"Our fisheries enforcement officers went to the scene and reported an angler for leaving their baited fishing rods unattended, as well as fishing without a valid rod licence.

"Broadland pike fishing is incredibly important to many anglers and is a significant asset for the local economy.

"Pike may look fearsome but they are fragile. Anglers need to fish for and treat pike with the utmost care and respect to ensure they can grow and become the 20 to 30 pound fish we all hope to catch."

With the popularity of pike fishing rising, the influx of more pike anglers to the Broads brings a boost to the local economy in the winter season.

However, both experienced and inexperienced anglers can unwittingly cause problems for pike stocks and the wider environment.

Enforcement Team Leader Lesley Robertson said: "Our Fisheries Enforcement Officers are clamping down hard on unacceptable angling practices such as leaving baited rods unattended.

"We will not hesitate to take enforcement action where anglers are found to be flouting the rules and putting fish stocks at risk."

Members of the public are asked to report unattended rods and illegal fishing using the 24 hour incident hotline number 0800 80 70 60