

Press release: Nine anglers face combined fines of over £5,500 for fishing illegally in Staffordshire

Just one month after penalising eight Staffordshire anglers, the same court issues a combined fines of £5,500 to another nine anglers for fishing offences.

On 20 March, North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court heard how nine anglers were caught fishing illegally last summer.

All nine were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on regular patrols. Six anglers pleaded guilty but the fines were much higher for those who didn't submit a plea and didn't appear in court. And with an annual fishing licence now costing £30 these nine are probably wishing they'd chosen the cheaper option!

Connor Grey of Oak Grove in Cheadle, Nicholas Mills of Neale Place in Stoke on Trent, Samuel Smith of Moston Street in Stoke on Trent, Ashley Gould of Thornewill Drive in Burton on Trent, Stephen Clarke of Sandwood Crescent in Stoke on Trent, Ashley Taylor of Birches Head Road in Stoke, David Pickerill of Hoveringham Drive in Stoke on Trent, Michael Horton of Chapel Drive in Walsall and Ryan Marriette of Skipton Road in Liverpool were all found guilty for fishing without a licence under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that in August and September Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Stafford, Cannock, Burntwood, Leek, Newcastle under Lyme and Burton.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With anglers now being able to buy a licence online for a number of rods to cover any 12 month period it seems ridiculous the minority still 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. Fishing licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from fishing 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;

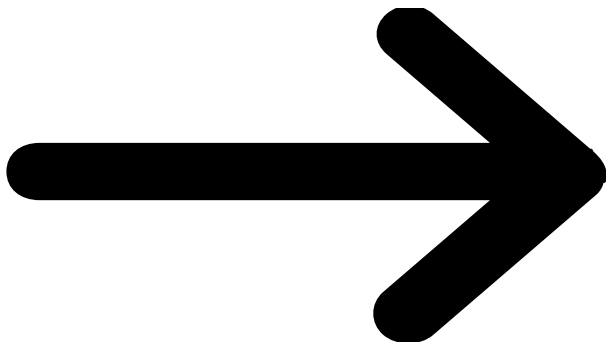
restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. Buying a rod licence is easy, simply visit www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence.

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

SNP Indyref obsession failing Scotland

21 Mar 2017



The Scottish Parliament has been diverted by a “pointless” two-day debate on independence – when it should be debating on key issues like the NHS and education, the Scottish Conservatives have said today.

The criticism was sparked following the SNP’s decision for Holyrood to spend two days debating whether or not to have a divisive referendum rerun.

It comes amid further evidence that the Nationalist government is ignoring the day job over its own responsibilities.

The debate today comes as:

- For the sixth consecutive month, the NHS failed to meet the 95 per cent waiting time target set out by the Health Secretary Shona Robison.
- Only 54 per cent of muscoskeletal patients have been seen in the four-week target timescale.

- Figures showed that Scots are drinking up to twice as much alcohol as they admit – amplifying Scotland’s unhealthy relationship with alcohol.
- The Scottish Chambers of Commerce warned that the SNP “needs to begin focusing on mitigating business costs and boosting consumer confidence over the next two years.”
- Reports revealed that the staffing numbers in schools are so low, students may be forced to learn from videos instead of qualified teachers.

Scottish Conservative deputy leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“The pointless two-day debate has frustratingly delayed the potential to address issues that are in great need of being discussed.

“The SNP has continuously stated that it is not obsessed with independence, but its actions certainly show otherwise.

“It’s clear people don’t want another referendum, they want a government that spends its every waking hour improving standards across all areas.

“When issues like health and education are crumbling under SNP leadership, Nicola Sturgeon and her party is completely failing Scotland by neglecting these issues and instead focusing on an unwanted referendum.”

A copy of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce release:

<http://www.scottishchambers.org.uk/press-policy/press-releases/2017/03/898>

UK inflation lags behind US and Spain and is close to Germany’s

The countries experiencing some reasonable recovery in demand are all experiencing an upturn in inflation of a similar magnitude. Slow growth economies have also experienced a rise thanks to oil and commodity prices, but less so than the faster growing ones.

Spain leads the pack with 3% inflation, followed by the US with 2.7%. The UK at 2.3% is close to Germany at 2.2%.

This is not some Brexit related phenomenon!

“THE UNION DELIVERS FOR THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND” – KEZIA DUGDALE

21 March 2017

Scottish Labour MSPs will vote against the SNP’s plan for another divisive referendum.

That was the message from Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale today. She said that the clear will of the Scottish people was expressed in 2014, when more than 2million voted to remain in the UK.

Scotland is already divided enough – we don’t need to be divided any further. That’s why Labour is so opposed to yet another divisive referendum.

Below is the full text of Kezia Dugdale’s speech in the Scottish Parliament today:

“Presiding Officer I wish this was the start of a two day debate on education in Scotland.

“We could focus on the need to close the attainment gap.

“We could put forward proposals for giving young people the best chance in life.

“We could come up with innovative ways to lift 260,000 Scottish children out of poverty.

“But instead we are back talking about the only thing that has ever really mattered to the SNP.

“Nicola Sturgeon wakes up every single day thinking of ways to engineer another referendum.

“Because leaving the UK is the only thing that matters to her.

“It isn’t improving education in Scotland.

“It isn’t lifting children out of poverty.

“It’s independence. That will always come first and the truth is it always has.

“When the first majority Labour Government established the NHS and the welfare state, the SNP wanted Scotland to leave the UK.

“When the last Labour Government introduced ground breaking anti-discrimination laws, maternity and paternity leave, the national minimum wage, tax credits, rights at work and civil partnerships, the SNP was arguing for Scotland to leave the UK.

"When the UK Labour Government delivered a Scottish Parliament – the expressed will of the people following a referendum – the SNP still campaigned for Scotland to leave the UK.

"Brexit isn't the motivation for another referendum – it's just the latest excuse.

"Now we have heard a lot from the First Minister about mandates. But people have noticed the shift in the SNP's language.

"They used to demand that the will of the Scottish people be respected but the will of the Scottish people was very clearly expressed in 2014.

"Eighty five per cent of our fellow citizens voted in the first referendum.

"And they voted by a very clear majority to remain in the United Kingdom.

"More than two million Scots, in the biggest mandate ever given to any political leaders in Scotland's history, voted to remain in the UK.

"That's the will of the Scottish people and that is what should be respected.

"We have already heard from the First Minister about the need to respect the will of this Parliament.

"If only she'd respected the mandate given to government by this chamber before now.

"If she had, several local NHS services would be free from the threat of closure hanging above their head.

"The First Minister would have banned fracking.

"And she would have scrapped the Football Act too.

"This Parliament has had its say on Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Funding Council. Will the First Minister respect that?

"And this Parliament voted to demand a change of course from the Nationalists on education. Given that's apparently her defining priority, surely the First Minister will respect that?

"So when this Parliament votes for another referendum – as it inevitably will thanks to the perpetual crutch the Greens provide – let's not pretend it reflects the will of the Scottish people.

"Because it doesn't.

"The people of Scotland do not want another divisive referendum.

"Last week the First Minister said the 2014 referendum wasn't divisive. She obviously didn't speak to many people beyond her own party faithful.

"Because my experience, and the experience of the very many Scots who have

taken the time to tell me on the doorstep, in the street and by email is that this country – their country – felt more divided than at any time in their lived memory.

“Families argued.

“Colleagues fell out.

“And communities were split down the middle.

“No bus, no train, no pub, no community centre, no work place, no living room escaped that fall out.

“And last Monday, the first day of this campaign, felt just as hostile and polarised as the 847th and final day of the last. Where does it end?

“Some of those who voted to leave the UK and the majority who voted to remain in the UK don’t want to go back to the divisions of the past.

“But if there is to be another referendum...

“If the First Minister must drag the people of Scotland back there...

“The Labour Party will campaign with everything we have to remain in the UK.

“And let me tell you why:

“I believe in the United Kingdom not as a symbol of past glories or purest ideology – but as a living, breathing union of nations that delivers for the people of Scotland.

“The pensioners, whose income is secured through a UK state pension and benefits system.

“The shipyard workers, who are in jobs because of UK defence contracts.

“The staff in East Kilbride, who deliver aid to some of the poorest countries in the world on behalf of us all.

“The schools that are built because of the extra money we receive by being in the UK.

“The NHS that we built together that is sustained because we pool and share our resources across the whole of Britain.

“The businesses, large and small, that are able to thrive because of the access they have to our UK single market.

“The scientists who carry out life-saving medical research because of funding from UK research councils.

“These are the things that I value most.

“These are the things that being part of the UK has delivered for families in

Scotland.

"So much prosperity and security.

"At a time when so much of the world is ravaged by division.

"When the trend in too many places is separation...

"...I value the fact that our four nations come together to share sovereignty and resources.

"That we recognise that together we're stronger, more so than we ever could be apart.

"And I say to the members opposite:

"It is not this union of nations which is intrinsically unjust or unfair, it's the actions of the powerful within it.

"Now I hate what the Tories are doing to Britain. I've never felt anger like it.

"Their austerity programme is destroying public services that we all value and the poorest rely on.

"But the SNP cannot escape from the facts.

"Leaving the UK would make things much worse for the poorest people in Scotland.

"And in the 6 years I've sat in this chamber I've never once heard a convincing argument to the contrary.

"Because separation would mean £15 billion worth of cuts.

"£15,000 million worth of cuts to schools and hospitals. The government's own figures tell us that.

"It means cuts to pensions. John Swinney told us that.

"It means an end to the UK defence contracts that keep thousands in work.

"Those are the facts.

"The Nationalists don't want to hear them.

"They will howl and they will rage.

"They will question the patriotism of those who back unity over division.

"But they cannot escape the reality.

"We are a stronger, richer, fairer and better nation by remaining in the UK.

"Tomorrow evening, Scottish Labour MSPs will vote against a divisive second

independence referendum.

“That was our manifesto commitment to the people of Scotland.

“And we will honour it.”

If you believe that together we’re stronger as part of the UK then sign out pledge at www.togetherstronger.scot

News story: MMO welcomes first NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has welcomed its first Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) Fellows to support its work in improving access to marine science.

Dr Jacqui Tweddle from the University of Aberdeen and Dr Katherine Yates from the University of Salford have started in their new roles of Knowledge Exchange Fellows, helping the MMO to deliver key elements of its Evidence Strategy.

Dr Tweddle and Dr Yates’ three year fellowships will focus on the use of science in decision making and marine management, encouraging greater knowledge exchange around marine research.

The two fellowships which are funded by NERC, will:

- Support the review of the use of science in the MMO’s decision making processes
- encourage greater collaboration between the MMO and academic and research communities
- fill gaps in marine evidence by influencing and improving access to external marine research

As part of their fellowship Dr Tweddle and Dr Yates will also identify and promote the vast amounts of marine data and evidence generated by scientific researchers to the MMO enabling the MMO to provide effective, efficient, targeted marine management based on the most up to data knowledge.

This work is an important part of delivering Part 2 of the [MMO’s Evidence Strategy](#), published August 2016. The Strategy sets out how knowledge exchange, partnership and influencing research will be used to deliver the MMO’s future evidence requirements.

Dr Tweddle said: “I’m excited to be working with the MMO, and grateful to NERC for the opportunity. Understanding more clearly what the MMO needs, and how the research community can support that, is a priority for me. I want to

help the MMO access and use the best scientific evidence and expertise available. Facilitating new contacts between researchers and the MMO will both help the MMO, but also provide researchers with opportunities to have their work make the biggest impact it can in supporting how we manage our marine activities.”

Dr Katherine Yates added: “Marine management is incredibly complicated and it’s essential that management decisions are based on robust, up-to-date evidence. Our roles will be to help with evidence provision, through both personal contributions and by facilitate partnerships between the academic community and the MMO. It’s an exciting opportunity and I am grateful to be part of it.”

Adam Cook, MMO’s Head of Evidence welcomed the two knowledge exchange fellows:

“We are delighted to welcome Jacqui and Katherine to the MMO. The scale and complexities of our seas means there is still much to learn about their ecosystems and our impact on them. Access to high quality evidence is critical to delivering effective and sustainable marine management and their work will be an invaluable part of improving access to this information.”

Notes

- [Dr Jacqui Tweddle](#) is a research fellow at the University of Aberdeen, and is an oceanographer with expertise in marine spatial planning.
- [Dr Katherine Yates](#) is a lecturer at University of Salford specialising in marine conservation planning and spatial management.
- Both fellowships are funded by the Natural Environment Research Council. NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows focus on accelerating and amplifying impact of NERC science. They do this through a number of different mechanisms, from NERC-funded research to working with business, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or, as in this case, government bodies.
- This new partnerships between the MMO and NERC is an important part of delivering the MMO’s Evidence Strategy, improving access to the latest scientific research and providing funding for a new Knowledge Exchange Fellowship.
- NERC is the UK’s main agency for funding and managing research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. Their work covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic science, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere and from the poles to the equator. They co-ordinate some of the world’s most exciting research projects, tackling major issues such as climate change, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on Earth, and much more. NERC is a non-departmental public body. They receive around £330m of annual funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).