

# Make time to go fishing



## Lincs and Northants Fisheries Enforcement Summary January - June 2018

### Introduction.

The information below summarises our area fisheries enforcement action from January 2018 until June 2018. The focus for our enforcement officers during this period is to enforce the coarse fish close season, as such staff have been out on the banks checking rivers, streams and drains and working with the Angling Trust and Police on Operation Clamp Down. In addition to this staff have been visiting a number of local fisheries in order to improve compliance with the Keeping & Introduction of Live Fish Regulations 2015. Staff have also been responding to reports of illegal gill nets, crayfish traps and other illegal instruments. The Environment Agency authorise the use of any instruments that are used to remove live fish from water. It is an offence to use unauthorised fishing equipment.

Focused Rod Licence checking will start again in June and this information will feature in National Environment Agency and Angling Trust press releases.

### Reports of Illegal Fishing within the Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire Area Jan and May 2018

During this period we have received 102 reports of suspected illegal fishing. From these, 13 reports were investigated by officers while 89 were not responded to. There are a number of reasons why we do not attend all reports, as such these figures need to be taken in consideration with the discussion below. We have a limited staff resource and cover a wide geographical area.

### Late Reporting

Often incidents are reported late and as such there is little staff can do. For example; during this period 26 incidents were reported too late for any response to be effective. Late reports do provide intelligence and staff will follow up when the opportunity arises. This again highlights the need for members of the public to call us at the time they suspect and offence is being committed.

### Intervention from the reporter

In addition to late reports we receive a number where the reporter has disrupted the activity on their own, as such this reduces the opportunity for further action by Environment Agency staff.

### Misunderstandings

Of course there are times when we receive reports where the reporter has not fully understood the law and no obvious offences have been committed. On these occasions we thank the reporter and provide advice and guidance. In addition we receive reports of 'suspect behaviour'. All reports of this type are logged and the area included in future patrols.

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[gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence](http://gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence)

### Summary of incident response

We received a report of a suspected Gill Net set in a river. On this occasion we were able to respond within 1 hour. Upon arrival the officer discovered that the object was in fact a weed boom.

We also received a report that a still water fishery manager had discovered a Gill Net. This was removed and destroyed by the fishery manager.

We responded to a report of suspect nets in a fenland drain. Staff responded and the illegal net was removed.

We received a report that 3 Crayfish Traps had been discovered. The reporter removed one of the traps and retained the others. Contact was lost with the reporter following a misunderstanding about Environment Agency Policy and Procedures

We received a report of a large fish trap cage that had been washed onto the river bank in flooding. This was collected and the area searched for additional instruments.



**Figure 1 Home made illegal fish traps**

We received a report of illegal traps that had been set in the Grand Union Canal. Our local officer was able to find the location, lift the traps and recover them to secure storage. These homemade traps may have been designed to catch crayfish but are potentially harmful to small silver fish and other river wildlife.

We received a late report of a suspected fish theft incident from a Stillwater fishery. The report was late coming into the Duty Officer and with very limited information. Private fish theft incidents are a matter for the Police however we do provide advice and guidance and log all reports as intelligence relating to possible offences relating to the Keeping & Introduction of Live Fish Act 2015.

Overall we received 44 reports of illegal fishing. The majority of these were 1-2 anglers fishing during the closed season. Some reports were classified as unsubstantiated Category 3 incidents to be included in future activities under Operation Clamp Down or to be visited as part of regular patrols at a later date. Where practicable we respond to all reports and deploy staff where staff are operating in the area and can be diverted. On 10 occasions where we responded our officers issued offence report notices.

Since January – our area has successfully completed c.31 fisheries related prosecutions. This figure is based on a crude search criteria and is considered to be a minimum estimate.

Further information on prosecutions are available at <http://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=1012>  
Summary Info

**Table 1.** showing prosecution data for April & May 2018

| Area         | Prosecutions Concluded | Successful Prosecutions | Success Rate | Fines | Average Fine | Costs | Average Costs | Caution s | Case Files Received |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|---------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Lincs & Nort | 2                      | 2                       | 100%         | £110  | £55          | £212  | £106          | 0         | 10                  |

**Table 2.** showing rod licence checks and evasion rates for April & May 2018.

|               |       |     | Total Checks | Multi Checks | New Checks | Offence Reports | Evasion Rate |
|---------------|-------|-----|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Year: 18 / 19 | April | LNA | 175          | 0            | 175        | 11              | 5.91%        |
|               | April |     | 175          | 0            | 175        | 11              | 5.91%        |
| Year: 18 / 19 | May   | LNA | 461          | 5            | 456        | 14              | 2.98%        |
|               | May   |     | 461          | 5            | 456        | 14              | 2.98%        |

**Please note.**

The data in this report has been extracted from our National Incident Reporting System which uses a simple search methodology for report purposes, and is not designed for the purposes of this report. The data provided above should be taken as indicative.

Report Ends