



Virtual Fisheries Forum 30/05/2023 (What Happens When You Report Illegal Fishing?).

Q&A session

Q. You have talked about the reduction in Fishery Officers and whilst as a retired Police Officer of course the Agency has to be 'Intelligence led' my question is when will the PHASE 2 VBS pilot be evaluated and potentially rolled out to other areas with what could be extra trained resources on the ground to support EA enforcement work? - What are the barriers if any to this happening?

A. (Dave) The Angling Trust Enforcement team want to see VBS phase 2 rolled out soon and progress is being made with this but ultimately the decision sits with the Environment Agency as to whether it is implemented.

A. (Damien) There have been some trials going on with phase 2 down in the south of England but it does not seem to be trialled in the north of the country currently.

Q. Can a club use cast nets to reduce stock (small rudd & roach) on their own waters?

A. (Damien) Cast nets are not nets I would advise to use for a cropping silverfish. You would be better off with a small seine or fyke net under license. Contact your local area fisheries officer and speak to them for tailored advice based on your fisheries.

Q. As a club bailiff the vast majority of incidents we come across are non-club members fishing the venue, ie theft of fishing rights. We do have a good relationship with our local police force (we even now have a special point of contact for fishing related crime). Whilst the incidents are reported to the Police as poaching incidents, should the incidents also be reported to the EA as it is not an incident that falls within the EA's bailiwick?

A. (Damien). By all means this should still be reported to the Environment Agency as it helps keep everyone in the loop of intelligence for the local area. We also may be able to attend an incident if the local police are not.

A. (Dave) One thing to mention is that in a few police forces around the country such as Wiltshire PCSO's are now being given additional powers to check a rod license. We are pushing this initiative as the more officers with power to check licenses and act to enforce fisheries law the better, particularly with the resource constraints we are all aware of.

Q. What are the typical signs to spot whether someone is snigging/snagging fish?

A. (Damien) To be sure you will need to have some observation from close proximity of the physical act but in terms of tackle the equipment I have caught offenders using is normally very thick monofilament sea fishing mainline 20-40lb breaking strain and big size one or two hooks. If observing an angler doing very sharp upwards jaggings of the rod from an area of high ground, especially off a bridge that is very suspect also.

Key contacts from this forum meeting:

- Alex Clegg (Angling Trust National Angler Engagement Manager)
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- Sam Hubbard (Angling Trust National Angler Engagement Officer)
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- Dave Lees (Angling Trust Regional Enforcement Manager for the North West)
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- Damien Linney (Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officer within the Cumbria & Lancashire team)
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