

PRESS RELEASE

RECREATIONAL DIVER FOUND GUILTY OF NIFCA BYELAW OFFENCE

In a prosecution brought by Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NIFCA) at North Tyneside Magistrates Court, Mr David Patterson a recreational diver from Yarm, Cleveland, pleaded guilty on 22nd January 2016 to landing 18 lobsters contrary to the NIFCA byelaw prohibiting the taking of more than 1 lobster when diving.

The NIFCA solicitor Noel Dilks told the court that on 23rd August 2015 a diver, Mr Patterson, was seen by local residents at a well-known diving site at Beadnell, Northumberland, making his way down to the foreshore and recovering a net bag containing lobsters. A local police officer attended the scene and spoke to Mr Patterson. The officer then decided to take a statement from him and it was agreed that all the lobsters would be released back into the sea (alive) after photographic evidence had been taken. The information of the incident was passed to NIFCA who invited Mr Patterson into the Authority's office for interview.

Northumberland IFCA's Chief IFCO Al Browne said "NIFCA and its officers take the breach of any regulation very seriously, particularly one such as this of landing more than one lobster, which is designed to conserve and protect fishing stocks for current and future generations of fishermen, as well as for the benefit of the marine environment. We are also very grateful for the attention of local residents and the assistance of officers from Northumbria Police in what is a good example of joint working. In this case, because of the large number of lobsters landed, in clear breach of the maximum number permitted in one day (one lobster) for somebody who is diving, the matter was felt to be so serious that it had to be dealt with by the Magistrates Court. The total financial payment which the court ordered from Mr Patterson as a result in the sum of £1,134, comprising a fine of £240, costs of £870 and victim surcharge of £24, demonstrates again the seriousness of an offence of this nature and the importance of complying with NIFCA byelaws".

END OF PRESS RELEASE