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## Six retired police officers join Angling Trust's fight against fisheries crime



**Six former police officers with over 150 years of policing experience between them have been appointed by the Angling Trust to help in the fight against fisheries crime.**

The new Regional Enforcement Managers will advise anglers on the law, raise awareness that poaching and fish theft are criminal offences, and work with the police, [Environment Agency](#) and other partners on fisheries-related issues.

Covering the whole of England, the six will be part of the [Angling Trust's](#) new Fisheries Enforcement Support Service, in partnership with and funded by Environment Agency rod licence money. In addition, they will also be supporting staff on the '[Building Bridges](#)' project – aimed at encouraging migrant anglers to fish legally – and on the roll-out of the [Voluntary Bailiff Service](#) across the country.

The new Regional Enforcement Managers include the former head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, and high-calibre detectives and inspectors, and all have received commendations for their policing throughout their careers.

**The Angling Trust's Head of Enforcement Dilip Sarkar MBE, himself a retired West Mercia police officer, said:** "This is a massive step forward in the fight to protect fish and fisheries, and - from a non-government organisation - is an unprecedented initiative. The experience of the new recruits across a wide range of specialisms will give angling a distinct advantage and spells bad news for offenders. I am very much looking forward to working with my team for the benefit of legitimate anglers."

The Angling Trust has been at the forefront of angling enforcement since 2012 and in recent years led on the introduction of two ground-breaking multi-agency operations involving police, the Environment Agency and other partners targeting illegal fishing and fish theft – Operation [Traverse](#) in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, and Operation [Leviathan](#) covering Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, West Midlands, Gwent, Dyfed, Powys and South Wales.

**Sarah Chare, Deputy Director of Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology at the Environment Agency, said:** "The Environment Agency is delighted to be working in partnership with the Angling Trust on angling crime. The appointment of the six experienced Regional Enforcement Managers (REMs) is the next step towards the Team England-wide network of 'eyes and ears' on the riverbank. Volunteers will be trained in how to spot and report suspicious or illegal activity in their locality, allowing our Fisheries officers to deploy intelligence led patrols where they are most needed. The link that the REMs provide to county police forces is also very welcome, enabling joint operations with partners and raising awareness of fish poaching offences with beat officers.

## The six Regional Enforcement Managers are listed below:

### Nevin Hunter – South West:



Nevin retired in July 2014 after 30 years with Devon and Cornwall Police. A wildlife crime officer of vast experience, his investigations have included illegal egg collecting, trade in birds of prey, taxidermy, poaching of deer, fish and game, and the illegal poisoning of birds of prey. His final posting was as Detective Inspector and Head of the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit.

He was awarded the UK Wildlife Enforcer of the Year title in 2001 and his commendations included one for his “leadership and dedication” in tackling wildlife crimes across Devon and Cornwall. Nevin also identified and highlighted to the UK government and the European Union the threat posed by the illegal Rhino horn trade which in 2010 resulted in amended legislation across the EU.

Nevin has been an Angling Trust Key Volunteer for over a year, working on fisheries enforcement workshops, the Voluntary Bailiff Service inductions and Operation Leviathan. Nevin, who is 55, said: “The professionalism demonstrated by the Angling Trust throughout my time

with the National Wildlife Crime Unit was inspirational and I am delighted to now have the opportunity to work for such a forward-thinking organisation. I fished as a boy and am looking forward to getting more involved and back into angling, but anticipate being busy!”

### Dave Lees – North West:



Dave recently retired from Greater Manchester after serving 30 years as a police officer. The first seven years of his career was with the Metropolitan Police where he was involved in two major incidents – the Broadwater Farm riots and the Kings Cross station fire where Dave was one of the first officers on the scene.

During his time with Greater Manchester Police, for several years Dave had responsibility for planning and commanding protected person escorts including members of the royal family, senior politicians, foreign dignitaries and high risk prisoners.

Dave has received numerous commendations throughout his career and has great experience of working with enforcement volunteers and migrant communities.

Dave, who is 54, said: “I love wildlife, the countryside and all forms of fishing which began for me when I was 10 years old. I am delighted to be

working for the Angling Trust, combining my hobby with experience and skills gained from 30 years’ police service. I firmly believe in the Angling Trust’s mission and look forward to being a part of that success.”

### Paul Thomas – Eastern England:



As a former member of the armed forces, a detective constable with Gloucestershire Constabulary and latterly running a successful private investigations agency, Paul has an extensive background in investigation and enforcement.

He has received numerous commendations and decorations throughout his career including one for thorough investigations and successful prosecutions for street robbery offences in Gloucester city centre and another for “displaying tenacity and professionalism” during a search that led to the recovery and seizure of more than £83,000 from a prolific drug dealer.

Paul, who is 50, said: “I am honoured and truly proud to be part of the Angling Trust and working with the Environment Agency delivering a robust and effective Angling Enforcement Campaign with positive outcomes for all anglers. The Building Bridges project and Voluntary Bailiff Service are the way forward for angling today, and as a truly passionate angler I am very excited by the opportunity to put something back into the hobby that has held me spell-bound for more than 40 years.”

### **Gary Lawless – London & South East:**



Environment Agency.”

Gary joined the Metropolitan Police at 19 and retired from the police service after 31 years in 2012 as an inspector, with wide-ranging experience including specialist intelligence. He has also been a football coach for 25 years, specialising in disabilities, and since leaving the police has worked on the private investigation of organised insurance fraud.

Gary has been awarded numerous medals and commendations throughout his career including two for bravery in saving a life from a fire and tackling a man armed with a knife, one relating to a firearms operation tackling gun crime, and another for “perseverance, diligence and professionalism” during the Harrods bombing incident.

Gary, who is 53, said: “I began fishing at an early age, cycling for hours to fish in ponds, lakes and canals in all weathers. That passion continued throughout my time in the police force and as a keen angler this is an exciting opportunity to work with and for anglers, using my policing experience to help protect fish and fisheries in support of the police and

### **Giles Evans – North East:**



Giles had a 30-year career in the police force and recently retired from Northumbria Police as a detective, having previously served with Dyfed-Powys.

He has a wealth of experience concerning serious crime investigations and intelligence gathering, and his many commendations included some for investigating and prosecuting gangs involved in rural crime offences and tackling an armed robber.

Giles, who is 50, said: “I worked on many cases affecting the rural community, so am acutely aware of the importance of this neglected area of policing, and have run investigations working with Special Constabulary volunteers. In my spare time, I am a keen angler, cyclist and take my gundog beating on various country estates in Northumberland – so the countryside is very important to me. I look forward to this exciting opportunity to continue making a difference.”

### **Kevin Pearson – Midlands:**



Kevin Pearson is a retired West Midlands Police inspector whose passion for angling started as a youngster fishing the River Severn at Bridgnorth and the Black Country canals.

Kevin retired from the force in 2009 having served for just over 31 years and during that time received numerous commendations including one for his work with police forces in Germany, France and Netherlands gathering evidence on human trafficking. He then coordinated a surveillance and arrest operation which resulted in lengthy prison sentences for the perpetrators.

Kevin’s interest in European languages led to him working with the French police and President Chirac over a number of days during a security operation for the G8 summit in the UK in 1998, and he has also worked closely with the Metropolitan Police on several diplomatic and security operations for heads of state and VIP visitors within the UK.

His passion for angling led to him becoming a member of the Birmingham Anglers’ Association and is currently the Superintendent Bailiff. Kevin is also a keen fly angler, particularly boat fishing, and has twice represented England Police in recent years. Kevin has been an Angling Trust Key

Volunteer since early this year, working on intelligence-gathering, delivering fisheries enforcement workshops and taking part in Operation Leviathan.

Kevin, who is 56, said: “My wide-ranging policing experience coupled with my post retirement work as a teacher in adult education have given me a solid foundation to take on this exciting and rewarding role as Regional Enforcement Manager for the Midlands region. I am very much looking forward to this new challenge.”