Twitter Thread by Wil Crisp



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The Environment Agency has documented 243 violations of the “farming rules for water” since they came into effect in April 2018 - but there have been no prosecutions or fines issued to polluters.

My latest exclusive for The

The region with the most breaches recorded was Devon and Cornwall, with 75, followed by Wessex with 52 .

The breaches the Environment Agency has recorded are a fraction of the actual number, according to conservation organisations.

@MarkLloydRT said: “This legislation is being violated on a regular basis across the country by farms and virtually nothing is being done to monitor it or enforce it.”

@MarkLloydRT: “Even when the Environment Agency identifies breaches, they don’t have the resources to follow up. All of the effort put into crafting the rules and consulting on this issue has proven to be a complete waste of time.”

The legislation, which was first announced in November 2017, gives the Environment Agency the power to prosecute or fine individuals and companies found to be polluting waterways with contaminated runoff water, or acting in a way that creates a high risk of pollution.

Under the legislation, fixed penalties of £100 or £300 can be issued as well as so-called “variable money penalties”, which can be as much as £250,000.

The rules were designed to combat agricultural pollution that is causing widespread environmental problems in British rivers.

Figures released by the Environment Agency in September showed, for the first time, that no river had achieved good chemical status and only 14% were found to be of a good ecological standard.

Runoff from agriculture is the biggest single polluter of British rivers, responsible for 40% of damage to waterways, according to the same research.

Rhiannon Niven, policy officer at the RSPB: “The fact that there haven’t been any penalties issued for breaches of the rules is shocking. It is outrageous that this legislation isn’t being enforced. Proper implementation of these regulations needs to be a much higher priority."

"If it is not prioritised, large-scale agricultural pollution will continue and so will the devastating impact it is having on biodiversity in the Britain."

@wwf_uk said: "Our UK rivers are in a dire state and have been for far too long. They are among the dirtiest waterways in Europe."

“The government must get a grip on this as they have promised to do and urgently ensure that polluters can be prosecuted more effectively so our vital waterways and the wildlife that they home can be protected.”

@Natures_Voice: "The ongoing review is a step in the right direction, but we believe that a much broader analysis of regulation and enforcement in the agricultural sector is needed.”