



ANNUAL REVIEW

2024

About BASC

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) is the largest shooting organisation in Britain and a representative body for sporting shooting and associated conservation.

BASC is a not-for-profit organisation, governed by an elected council. In 2024, its membership was approximately 150,000. Based in Rossett, near Wrexham, the association has 133 staff. BASC is the only shooting organisation in the country with specialist full-time teams covering:

- firearms
- conservation
- land management
- gamekeeping and Gundogs
- deer management
- training and education
- wildfowling
- media and political issues.

There are country centres based in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as five regional offices in England.

BASC's mission is:

- to promote and protect sporting shooting and advocate its conservation role throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- to represent members' interests by providing an effective and unified voice for sustainable shooting sports;
- to benefit the community by providing education, promoting scientific research and advocating best practice in firearms licensing, habitat conservation, and wildlife and game management; and
- to promote the benefits of game as food.

Today, BASC is working as hard as ever to protect and promote shooting. Detailed in the pages of this publication are a number of the key projects, initiatives and activities that comprised the association's work in 2024.

To keep up to date with BASC's latest activity, see the BASC website, social media, e-newsletters and bi-monthly print magazine or listen to our podcast.



A proud heritage

The association was born in a small black hut on the banks of the Humber more than a century ago. A group of wildfowlers, concerned at the loss of habitat and other threats to waterfowl, decided to form their own organisation. They were led by Stanley Duncan, a railway engineer and a highly experienced wildfowler and naturalist. In 1908, the Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland (WAGBI) held its first official meeting in Hull.

By 1981, WAGBI boasted a membership of 50,000, had merged with the Gamekeepers' Association, and had a far wider remit than simply representing wildfowlers. To reflect its inclusive role as the voice of shooting, its name was changed to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC).

BASC not only provides a service to its members but is active in the public and political arenas, defending the interests of shooting. In its century-long history, BASC has had many notable achievements:

- BASC has worked with the government to produce codes of practice, promoting the highest standards of animal welfare and firearms ownership. Digital copies can be found on the BASC website.
- When the Protection of Birds Act (1954) introduced protection for all wild birds, the association helped to found more wildfowling clubs throughout the UK to ensure that shooting was carried out responsibly, sustainably and within the law.
- In 2000, BASC produced a biodiversity action plan for all shooting and now works with a wide range of conservation organisations, from county wildlife trusts to government authorities.

IMAGE: MATT KIDD

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Chairman's report

BASC chairman Eoghan Cameron looks back on an eventful year which saw the association continue to promote the benefits of shooting and conservation on every front.

If the desolate expressions on my Labradors' faces are anything to go by, another game shooting season has come and gone. While preparing final birds for the freezer, I begin to reflect, not only on the recent season, but the past year at BASC. And if you follow your association's activities, you'll know what kind of year it was. You'll understand that BASC has and will remain unflinching and unsurpassed in the defence and promotion of shooting. Political sands have shifted, new threats and opportunities have emerged, while old opponents linger. You've seen BASC continue to adapt, overcome, grow more powerful and influential. You've observed our absolute readiness to engage positively where possible and our total resolve to fight where necessary.

Of course, not every member can keep abreast of all BASC's exploits and achievements over the course of a year. While not for the fainthearted, my task of condensing a year's work to a few headline items is thoroughly illuminating. These key points alone demonstrate why those who take the future of shooting seriously refuse to compromise on the organisation they join.

Key achievements

- The new *Value of Shooting* (VoS) report came out prior to the general election. For more information, please see page 8.
- Following the general election, BASC reformed the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Shooting and Conservation. The group now has officers from every major political party in Westminster.
- BASC's Fighting Fund supported significant legal victories, including two successful appeals against the revocations of firearms certificates. See page 17 for more information.
- The attendance of the (former) Secretary of State for Defra, Steve Barclay, at BASC's Northern Gamekeepers' Conference gave members the chance to put questions to a key decision-maker face to face.



- In a demonstration of the importance of self-regulation, research published by BASC and the University of Exeter on the voluntary restraint of woodcock shooting showed more than 90 per cent of respondents do not shoot woodcock before 1 December.
- We worked with Cumbria Police to reduce its firearms licensing backlog; the force announced the clearance of 1,795 non-complex firearm applications.
- Following the initial suspension of firearm grant applications by Gloucestershire Police, the reopening of applications demonstrated the tangible impact possible when BASC, our members and MPs work together.
- The passing of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, which resulted in the opening of the Scottish grouse licensing system, saw BASC heavily involved in the parliamentary process. This resulted in disproportionate suspension powers on red grouse shooting and wildlife trapping being removed.
- A new BASC report put a number on the financial value of the natural capital of shooting in the UK – £1.1 billion.
- We hosted our first BASC Wildlife Fund political reception in the Senedd at the start of 2024. For more information on the Fund, please see page 30.
- In 2024, BASC ran a series of BASC Women in Shooting events, including our first Ultimate Women's Event.
- The new BASC sustainable shooting code of practice for wildfowl quarry species was launched, demonstrating the importance of self-regulation.
- The BASC register of competent deer stalkers was launched to provide more deer management opportunities for BASC members.

In numbers

- Our full-time specialist firearms department handled **8,537 enquires**.
- We held more than **110 formal meetings** with firearms licensing departments and PCCs.
- BASC to School educated a record-breaking **52,655 children** about shooting and the countryside.
- We delivered more than **6,000 shotgun coaching lessons**, as well as **1,000 courses** to individuals and businesses.
- We held more than **100 introductory shooting events**.
- Regional and Country teams delivered more than **400 shoot briefings** and took part in more than **500 stakeholder engagements**.
- Our website had **5.5 million visits** and was accessed by **1 million people**.
- BASC YouTube content was watched more than **203,000 times**.

In the media

BASC appeared on several mainstream television and radio channels on topics ranging from grouse shooting to Crufts, including: Channel 4 and ITV, STV, BBC Alba, BBC Radio Scotland and Radio 4 *Farming Today*.

BASC was quoted and featured in several articles in the national, regional and international press, including:

- *Financial Times* (Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill);
- *Daily Telegraph* (gamebird releasing in Wales, VoS launch);
- *Metro* (national campaign promoting the VoS);
- *The Telegraph* (BASC's efforts to promote game meat; debanking; deer management legislation changes in Scotland; health benefits of shooting);
- *The Yorkshire Post* (Boxing Day shoots; conservation benefits of grouse moors during the closed season);
- *The Sunday Times* (BASC's efforts to promote game meat);
- *The Times*; (Maasai tribe cultural exchange and hare coursing);
- *The Guardian* (grouse season update); and
- *Toronto Star*, *Las Vegas Sun* and *Mail Online* (importance of deer management).



The past year represents another formidable record of action and achievement by your association. While no two years are the same, one thing remains constant: BASC never rests on its laurels. We are intensely alive to the myriad natural and human factors that do and could affect shooting, now, in the medium term and in decades to come.

While 2025 will bring known challenges and opportunities, we are extremely adept at dealing with the unexpected. Strategically and tactically, BASC remains the only organisation with the scale, capability and resource to deliver for shooting in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We continue to tread confidently where others cannot and do not go, ensuring our members' presence is felt and their voices are heard. BASC doesn't operate in comfort zones.

Which is why we are enormously grateful to you, our members, who take preserving your way of life so very seriously. Your continued loyalty and support ensure that BASC remains the very serious organisation that you need to fight for that way of life.

With you by our side, we look forward to continuing to make the difference for shooting in the coming year.

EOGHAN CAMERON
Chairman

BASC Council

BASC is governed by an elected council. Any full member of the association may be nominated for a council seat and, if elected, will serve for five years, with a maximum of two terms. Council meets ten times a year and it is charged with setting strategy and policy, while operational executive is delegated to the chief executive. Ultimate responsibility for the direction and sound running of the association resides with the council. Details of elections and vacancies are provided in Shooting and Conservation – BASC's bi-monthly magazine – and on the BASC website. Results are announced at the AGM.



Oliver McCullough

Elected 2015 –
Northern Ireland seat
(County Down)

Oliver has been a member of BASC/WAGBI for 53 years. He is a keen wildfowler and woodcock shooter. He is a committee member of the Comber Wildfowlers and is also the club's representative on the joint council on Strangford Lough. He has chaired BASC's Executive and Finance Committee and led in the governance review of the association.



Chris Barker

Elected 2021
National Seat (Yorkshire)

Chris is a long-standing BASC member and passionate shooter. He is secretary of the Fenland Wildfowlers and serves on the Hull and East Riding Wildfowlers Association committee. Semi-retired, he lives with his wife and their four dogs on a smallholding in the Yorkshire Wolds where they raise their own rare-breed pork and lamb.



Eoghan Cameron

Chairman
Elected 2017 –
Scotland seat (Angus)

Eoghan has been BASC chairman since 2019, following a year as vice chairman. He lives in rural Angus and is dedicated to protecting and promoting sustainable shooting, having participated in field sports since childhood. His passions are deer stalking, driven and walked-up game shooting, and fishing. A BASC member of nearly 30 years, he is also chairman of Aim to Sustain, the BASC Scotland Committee and SYCET.



Professor Ann Mortimer

Elected 2015
National seat (Yorkshire)

Ann enjoys air rifle, shotgun and rifle shooting. She is a member of a ladies-only roving syndicate and a regular deer stalker. As a psychiatrist with extensive experience, she teaches junior doctors and firearms enquiry officers about mental health and firearms issues.



Robin Marshall-Ball

Elected 2016
England seat (Wiltshire)

Robin was a secondary school teacher for 27 years. He has also worked in the food industry and as BASC's conservation officer in south-west England. He is now retired and conducts game cookery demonstrations at events. Robin has written many articles for shooting magazines and has published seven books on shooting-related matters.



John Harlow

Elected 2022
National seat (Lincolnshire)

A passionate wildfowler, John also picks up on his local farm shoot and loves training his dogs. Now retired, he served in the Metropolitan Police for 30 years, progressing to the rank of chief inspector for the last ten years of his career.



Claire Sadler

Vice chair
Elected 2018 –
National seat (London)

Claire is a keen game shot and deer stalker as well as enjoying clay shooting, air rifles, working her dogs and fishing. She is a passionate advocate of field sports and encourages more women and youngsters into the outdoors. Claire is head of legal for a technology company and has a background in FCA and contentious matters.



Al Gabriel

Elected 2020
National seat (Northumberland)

Al is a molecular biologist with a background in ecology and genetics. He is a keen deer stalker and a freelance writer for shooting magazines. Al has a strong interest in promoting diversity in shooting and public understanding of country sports.



John Furbisher

Elected 2023
National seat (Yorkshire)

John was a *Sunday Times* staff reporter, *Yorkshire Post* deputy editor, editor of two regional daily newspapers and worked in Brussels as head of media for British MEPs before forming his own consultancy. He enjoys a round of clays, driven and walked-up game days, shooting for gundog trials and the occasional stalking trip. He also undertakes pest control duties on local farms.



Gareth Wilson

Elected 2024
National seat (Suffolk)

Gareth, a former Suffolk Police chief constable, brings 30 years of policing and executive experience to BASC. An avid deer stalker and participant in conservation schemes, he combines his passion for country pursuits with strategic planning and communication expertise, benefiting BASC's advocacy, governance, and member engagement efforts.



Aidan Dryden

Elected 2024
National Seat (Worcestershire)

Aidan is a passionate wildfowler and rough shooter. He joined BASC in 1979. As a scientist and a veterinary advisor, he brings valuable insights into industry and government. Aidan supports BASC's evidence-based advocacy, focusing on habitat conservation and sustainable practices, while promoting the rights and traditions of shooting sports.



Angela Charlton

(Co-opted in 2025)

Angela is a wildlife artist with experience in environmental education and conservation. She worked for Wildlife Trusts and RSPB and is currently the director of Ramblers Wales. She excels in strategic planning, advocacy and managing large projects, and is passionate about sustainable practices and community engagement.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Lord Geoffrey Dear



As a retired police officer, a former chief constable and a member of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Lord Dear has been a BASC member for 41 years. He was elected president of the association in 2017. He lists country sports as a recreation and is a keen Shot who has previously supported the charitable work of the BASC Wildlife Fund.

Ian Bell



Ian joined the BASC team as chief executive in February 2018. Ian has a lifelong passion for shooting and the conservation benefit it brings. He first joined BASC as a Young Shot. He is committed to fight for our way of life. A former Brigadier in the British Army, he took up the position at BASC at the end of his final deployment as Commander British Forces Germany.

Christopher Graffius



An ex-officio member of BASC Council since 2001, Christopher has worked in politics, media and PR since 1983. Committed to securing all-party support for shooting and balanced media coverage, he has hunted across Europe and the States, stalked deer in Scotland, fowled in Wales and the north west and enjoys shooting game on a syndicate in the Welsh Marches.

Terry Behan



Terry is a lifelong shooter and grew up as the son of a gamekeeper, learning the value of hard work and hands-on experience. He is passionate about working his springer spaniels and woodpigeon shooting and deer management. Terry is a chartered surveyor and housing practitioner. He has recently been appointed as BASC's deputy executive director of shooting and operations.

Peter Clark



Peter joined BASC as Scotland public affairs manager in 2022. He was appointed BASC's Scotland director in 2023. His extensive knowledge of rural affairs and parliamentary procedures places him well to deal with the large number of policy matters that shooting faces. Peter is a keen clay and game shot and a fervent defender of the countryside.

Steve Griffiths



BASC Wales director Steve has a background in farming and land management in Wales. He previously worked for the National Trust and University of Wales as an estate manager. Before joining BASC, Steve was a projects manager and deer liaison officer for the Deer Initiative. He is a keen deer stalker and is passionate about conservation work and protecting Wales' rural landscapes.

Caroline Bedell



Caroline holds a degree in rural land management which led her to qualifying as a rural practice chartered surveyor. In 2001, Caroline joined the CLA as its regional surveyor, progressing to become its national public access advisor. In 2006, she took on the position of CLA Midlands regional director. In 2018, Caroline joined BASC to lead the conservation team.

Matt Ellis



Matt is a scientist by training with a PhD in pheasant immunology. He joined BASC as a research officer in 2009 and managed the science and research teams before recently taking on his current role of executive director of conservation. Matt is actively involved in many areas of shooting, including pest control, driven game and deer management.

Gareth Dockerty



Gareth joined BASC in 2016 as a regional officer in the north-east of England. He was subsequently appointed to a new post as uplands officer, a role close to his heart, having grown up in the North Yorkshire moors. He has recently been appointed as BASC's executive director of shooting and operations.

Tommy Mayne



Tommy has been involved in shooting for 39 years and was employed by BASC as country officer back in 2008, before becoming BASC's director for Northern Ireland in 2010. He is a BASC-accredited shotgun coach and holds both DSC1 and DSC2 qualifications. Tommy is also a Deer Management Qualification (DMQ) assessor and a BASC-approved trainer for a range of courses.

The Value of Shooting

The 2024 Value of Shooting report was commissioned by 24 organisations involved with shooting and the countryside and was produced by BASC. It spelt out the economic, environmental and social benefits the shooting sector brings to the UK.

Shooting is worth £3.3bn a year to the UK economy

Shooters spend money on guns, ammunition, sporting clothing, accessories, travel, hospitality and payment to shooting providers. The providers buy materials and services. All this economic activity supports a nationwide supply chain of manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers required to service it. And a significant amount of shooting activity relies on the involvement of an army of volunteers and unpaid workers who all contribute to the local economy.

This new research showed that shooting directly contributes **£3.3bn** of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy per year. The research was also able to quantify the value of voluntary or unpaid support to shooting activities, known as a Contribution in Kind (CiK), and based on equivalent earnings; this element is worth **£2.1bn** annually.

Overall, the figures indicate that in the UK, including both the tangible GVA, employment and wage impact, and the intangible impact of CiK, shooting activities generate the equivalent of **173,000** full-time jobs and **£9.3bn** of wider economic activity.

Where there is game there is conservation

Habitat management and wildlife and conservation activity by the shooting community has a significant beneficial impact on the countryside. There are approximately **24.5m** hectares of land in the UK, **93 per cent** of which is rural. Around **7.6m** hectares are subject to habitat and wildlife management and other conservation work carried out because of shooting.

Nearly all shooting providers carry out extensive conservation work to benefit both quarry species and the wider ecosystem. Two-thirds of providers reported controlling

pests and predators to protect wildlife, and around half manage woodlands, cover crops, or put out feed for songbirds over the months when other food is scarce.

A much more extensive range of conservation work is carried out by volunteers. When this is added to the paid conservation work carried out by providers, the value of voluntary conservation work carried out was estimated at **£500m** every year, equivalent to **26,000** full-time jobs.

Health, wellbeing and social cohesion

Three out of four of those who took part in a shooting related activity agreed that it was important to them and their personal wellbeing and that they would lose something important if they were not involved. To emphasise the way participants value shooting as a part of their lives, more than 80 per cent of people said they had also encouraged friends to become involved.

Three out of four people who were involved in shooting carried out conservation work voluntarily, saying they found it enjoyable and the right thing to do for environmental reasons.

Nine out of ten said exercise and getting out in the fresh air and being part of a community with a shared purpose, along with relating to nature and the environment, were key factors in their involvement.

Four out of five shooters agreed that it enabled them to engage with others in the community, and to refocus and maintain links to their heritage. The benefit to mental health was also highlighted, with loneliness less of an issue for shooters than the average citizen. Three quarters said they never, or hardly ever, felt lonely, while the corresponding figure for the whole of the UK was just over half.

Habitat management and conservation are carried out on
7.6m
hectares as a result of shooting

Shooting is worth
£3.3bn
to the UK economy

620,000
people are actively involved in shooting related activities



CASE STUDY

The moorland keeper

Gamekeeper Bernard Moss is the sporting manager for shooting estates in North Yorkshire covering 28,000 acres. Moorland accounts for 21,000 acres, the remainder is lowland shooting.

Annually, the estates put on around 120 driven shooting days, including 30 grouse days. Although, says Bernard, when you add in walked-up shooting, falconry and dog training events, the number of active days is nearly 200. This provides significant local employment.

"On a grouse day, we have an average eight Guns, each paying in the region of £3,000 a day," said Bernard. "A grouse day employs around 35 people from the local community. We also run two shoot lodges where Guns can stay overnight, requiring staff, including a full-time chef. Overall, the estates employ 18 people directly." All this adds up to around 4,500 work days a year on the shoots, plus hundreds more in hospitality. "In addition, the estates buy grain and food from local farmers, and processed game from local suppliers to give to the Guns."

Bernard also pointed out the estates' contribution to the environment: "We carry out our own wader surveys and a project funded by National Parks to monitor curlew breeding, behaviour and distribution using satellite tagging. We also plant hedgerows and 40 acres of wild bird food to help birds through the winter, which wouldn't happen if there was no shooting here."

Public acceptance and media

Effective communication remains at the heart of BASC's mission to represent and defend sustainable shooting. Leveraging all available communication channels, we continuously seek new ways to engage our members, inform the wider shooting community and shape public discourse.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Establish BASC as the leading authority on shooting by providing balanced and informed commentary in the media.
- Communicate effectively, engage in debate and swiftly rebut inaccurate or misleading information.
- Deliver proactive media engagement across print, broadcast and digital platforms.
- Ensure members remain well-informed through multi-platform communications.
- Maintain clear and effective communication with all stakeholders, ensuring feedback is analysed and acted upon.
- Publish a sector-leading shooting magazine alongside other high-quality publications.

Activity in 2024

Amid a year of significant challenges, our team remained focused on ensuring the shooting community was well represented and informed. A key focus was the police and crime commissioner (PCC) elections across England and Wales, where we encouraged members and the wider shooting community to contact their PCC candidates via our dedicated online platform.

The campaign sought assurances that firearms licensing departments would process grants and renewals within 17 weeks. The platform received more than 13,500 visits and we gathered valuable data from PCC responses to both members and BASC.

Another major milestone was the publication of the *Value of Shooting* (VoS) report (see page 8), produced in collaboration with 23 other leading countryside organisations. Published on 4 June, it was widely covered by national and specialist media, including *The Daily Telegraph* and *Shooting Times*.

A week before the general election, we took out a full-page advert in *Metro* newspaper, supported by a substantial social media campaign in major metropolitan areas designed to promote the true value of shooting.

The VoS report also featured prominently at both the Scottish Game Fair and The Game Fair, with dedicated areas on our stands. Our team was kept busy engaging with visitors, highlighting the report's key statistics and emphasising the shooting sector's positive contribution to the UK.

BASC's international connections were reflected in a special visit from members from a Maasai tribe. The Maasai toured the UK as part of a cultural exchange, visiting schools and engaging with communities. BASC sponsored a minibus to assist with their two-week trip, which included an invitation to visit the association's head office at Marford Mill near Wrexham. Discussions covered shooting, conservation and shared challenges in wildlife management, reinforcing the global importance of responsible land stewardship.

The Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics presented an opportunity to celebrate shooting on a global stage. BASC championed the success of British athletes, including Nathan Hales, who secured gold in Men's Trap, Amber Rutter, who won silver in Skeet, and Tim Jeffery, who claimed his first Paralympic medal – a bronze in R9 rifle prone SH2. Their achievements were widely promoted across BASC's media platforms, showcasing the role of shooting in elite sport and the talent within the UK shooting community, reinforcing the sport's importance.

BASC's *Shooting and Conservation* magazine remains a firm favourite among members, continuing to set the benchmark for sector-leading publications. With engaging features, expert analysis and regional updates, it ensures that every member finds content relevant to their interests.

The digital landscape remains a key area of focus with BASC's social media presence reaching new heights in 2024. BASC's channels now boast more than 219,000 followers and accumulated 1.1 million video views across all platforms. Our YouTube channel continues to grow, with 27,000 subscribers and more than 203,000 views throughout the year, showing the platform's value as an educational and engagement tool.

Through these efforts, BASC continues to lead the way in media and public engagement, ensuring shooting remains represented, respected and valued in an ever-evolving media landscape.



BAS

The British Association for

CASE STUDY

Crufts 2024

Crufts delivers a vast global audience, with BASC enjoying a prominent role on gundog day every year.

In 2024, our team was kept busy on the day, providing live social media coverage, liaising with journalists and interviewing participants.

With more than 3,200 likes, the picture of the winning dog, a Labrador called Tweed, is still our most liked Instagram post to date. Our team also created fun and interactive Instagram reels with competitors on the day.

We liaised with Channel 4 to facilitate interviews with young handler Daisy Upton and captured footage which was used on their primetime Crufts programme. We also secured coverage on ITV, in *The Scotsman* and many regional outlets.

Our BASC Official Podcast was recorded live at the event and included conversations with the judges, interviews with competitors and comments from the general public.

IMAGE: NIGEL KIRBY

Westminster and Whitehall

We work to secure and maintain our strategic objective of all-party political consensus in support of shooting and conservation. That depends on forging strong relationships with politicians and officials and having the opportunity to educate and inform them of the facts.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Maintain cross-party support for shooting and conservation.
- Promote the interests of shooting in Westminster, Whitehall and in the devolved legislatures.
- Improve political understanding of the importance of shooting and conservation.
- Increase parliamentary understanding of BASC's work.

Activity in 2024

The political affairs team achieved a record number of engagements with politicians in 2024. The main event was the general election, and this provided BASC with the opportunity to engage with candidates from all parties across the UK. We met Labour candidates at county shows, online and even took them on to grouse moors to build relationships and knowledge.

This allowed the team to hit the ground running with the new government, as we already had established relationships with ministers in our sponsoring government department of Defra and throughout the backbenches. We had our usual high turnout at The Game Fair with new MPs from all major parties arriving at the BASC stand every 30 minutes over the three days to learn about the work we are doing in their regions and to discuss some of the pressing matters facing shooting.

Together with the Angling Trust, we hosted Rural Reception at the three main party conferences. The Minister of State for Defra, Daniel Zeichner (pictured above right), spoke to a packed room in Liverpool while several prominent Liberal Democrats addressed supporters in Brighton and the Shadow Defra Secretary of State spoke in Manchester. All outlined their support for shooting, conservation and BASC.

Following the general elections, we helped reform the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Shooting and Conservation which elected MPs as officers for the group from the Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Reform parties. Although many supporters left Parliament in 2024, it was



important to show the cross-party support shooting still has in Westminster.

The organisation and our sector still face numerous challenges. These come from within Whitehall, such as the changes to firearms licensing that we will see next year. A petition was started by Wild Justice to ban driven grouse shooting and we expect this to be debated in Parliament in 2025. The political affairs team has already begun briefing politicians on this subject. We were pleased to see that due to our lobbying, the Labour Government has publicly confirmed its support for driven grouse shooting.

We will continue to meet politicians from across the political divide to ensure the future of shooting and conservation.



IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/CHRIS DORNEY

Training and education

From game shooting, airgunning and wildfowling to deer stalking, clay shooting and pest and predator control, BASC's training and education team engages directly with members to provide advice, put on courses, and write codes of practice. This department also maintains a stable of accredited shotgun coaches who deliver shooting lessons all over the UK.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Set, develop and maintain standards in all areas of shooting.
- Work with partner organisations and other BASC teams to provide comprehensive training opportunities, produce codes of practice and monitor and improve standards in shooting and food hygiene.
- Establish the credentials and improve the standards of our skilled trainers and assessors so that the work they do has public credibility.
- Anticipate and respond to demand from members and other shooters for awards such as Wild Game Meat Hygiene and the Game Shooter Certificate 1.

Activity in 2024

BASC and partner organisations continued to drive promotion of the Code of Good Shooting Practice in 2024 on social media and at events across the country.

The Deer Initiative's suite of best practice guides for deer stalkers in England and Wales is managed by the sector for the sector. BASC is part of this group and the guides are available online. A similar suite of guides for deer stalkers is available in Scotland and is managed by NatureScot.

BASC is one of only two organisations currently delivering wild boar training and is approved by Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) to assess the DMQ wild boar qualification.

BASC ran several coaching lines and airgun lines in 2024, introducing 6,604 people to the sport, many of whom were youngsters.

We delivered 151 courses for 863 people in 2024, covering all aspects of shooting sports.

The BASC Deer Assessment Centre, which administers DMQ qualifications, took 800 DSC1, 301 DSC2 and 29 Wild Boar Certificate registrations in 2024.

We also delivered 29 courses for our commercial services team, mainly for staff managing zoos/wildlife parks and those undertaking polar research.

BASC develops and maintains relevant codes of practice for the shooting sector, as well as best practice guidance which are hosted on our website. These codes are regularly visited by more than 50,000 people a year and are valuable reference documents.

Website engagements including online assessments for DSC1 and Wild Boar plus downloads of various codes of practice were recorded at 9,594 in 2024. Nearly 4,500 of these engagements were online Safe Shot assessments.

Two new courses were developed in 2024 – Pest and Predator (night shooting) and Humane Animal Dispatch.

Looking ahead

The team will be focusing on providing more online self-assessments. New courses will be developed to fill gaps in our portfolio where there is a need to improve standards and a willingness from our members to get involved. We continue to develop, maintain and promote best practice with key partners.

Sustainable ammunition has now become an integral part of all events run by BASC, giving people the opportunity to try alternatives to lead. All 12-bore and 20-bore cartridges used by us at game fairs are steel or other alternatives to lead. The Game Shooter Certificate will go online in early 2025, with other courses being converted to go online later the year.



A first-person perspective shot from behind a person with red hair and a black cap, aiming a shotgun in a grassy field. The background shows a golden field under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

CASE STUDY

Essex International Jamboree

In 2024, BASC delivered an outstanding shotgun shooting experience at the Essex International Jamboree at Boyton Cross near Chelmsford. The shooting line was the highlight for many participants, offering a safe and engaging introduction to clay pigeon shooting with our professionally trained shotgun coaches.

Over the six days a team of 18 volunteer coaches and eight Scout leader marshals introduced shotgun shooting for 4,965 Scouts and Guides. The young people were booked into groups of 15 and issued their lanyards and coloured eye dominance cards. Each group was then attended to by trained operatives to have their eye dominance, stance and gun fit assessed.

BASC's coaches ensured that each participant, regardless of prior experience, received expert guidance. Their patient and clear instruction allowed newcomers to feel comfortable handling a shotgun, with the emphasis on safety. For many this was the very first experience of shotgun shooting, leaving them with a positive memory which might last a lifetime.

Large events like this could not be done without the support of our sponsors, Eley Hawk, Browning International and Promatic, who all deserve a big thank-you for their efforts.

IMAGES: CALLUM McMEINCH-RILEY

Firearms

BASC is the only UK shooting organisation that offers its members access to a full-time, in-house, team of experts able to advise on all aspects of firearms ownership and use. They are also able to provide forensic evidence and expert legal support for members facing court proceedings.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Provide BASC members with the best possible advice, whether legal, technical, or practical, on all aspects of firearms possession and use.
- Using credible advocacy, attempt to influence those whose decisions could have an impact on the reasonable expectations of members to possess and use firearms for legitimate purposes.
 - **Parliamentarians** – encourage effective, evidence-led legislation.
 - **Home Office** – promote sensible public policies for legitimate firearms ownership.
 - **National Police Chiefs' Council** – promote consistency of administrative practice in firearms licensing.
 - **Firearms Licensing Units** – use direct advocacy to represent members' interests.
 - **Other police personnel** – provide bespoke, quality training to educate and inform on shooting matters.

Activity in 2024

The announcement of a general election in May, with the country going to the polls on 4 July, put the team's political work in limbo. The subsequent election of a Labour government triggered a series of requests to the new administration for ministerial meetings. Ministers declined to meet BASC, offering their officials instead.

Although this impasse caused a hiatus in the team's workflow, contact with other parliamentarians was maintained. Specifically tailored briefs were prepared on an ad hoc basis to inform individual parliamentarians. These briefs must be correct in law, technically accurate and above all, concise. They are often needed at short notice and BASC prides itself on being able to produce quality briefings to influence and inform MPs. This is a good example of inter-department working within BASC to create a consolidated approach to lobbying for shooting.

Topics upon which the Strategic Firearms Unit (SFU) has briefed politicians include the hostile proposal to align the

licensing regimes for Section 2 shotguns and Section 1 firearms; certificate fees; the de-regulation of sound moderators; the extension of certificate life to ten years; and proposals to further regulate knives and machetes, both tools being vital for countryside activities.

The experience and expertise of the BASC SFU is widely recognised and often sought; for example, BASC's director of firearms sits on the National Crime Agency's Criminal Use of Firearms (Prevent) Board. This gives the opportunity for BASC to make the point to senior police officers that sporting firearms have no link to armed crime.

He is also a member of the Home Office reference panel for historic handguns. Additionally, BASC's head of firearms continues to chair the forensic regulator's specialist firearms group.

Looking ahead

As an apolitical organisation, BASC will need to build a relationship with the new Labour government to ask for its support for strategic issues that its predecessor was dealing with before the election. These are:

- Fairness and transparency in setting a new certificate fees order.
- An extension in certificate life from five to ten years.
- The deregulation of sound moderators.

BASC will also continue to liaise with Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure that firearms licensing units are adequately resourced. That is particularly important in failing forces (at present only about 25 per cent of police forces provide an acceptable service to their certificate holders). In other areas, such as driving licences or passports, such desultory performance would be unacceptable. There is no reason why firearms licensing should be an exception.



CASE STUDY

Fighting Fund

BASC has a specific Fighting Fund to cover the legal expenses of members whose cases have been approved for appeal against firearms licensing decisions to the Crown Court. The criteria against which these cases are initially judged are “has the member suffered an injustice through poor police decision making?” and “does the case disclose of reasonable prospects for success?”. A further criterion is that the case merits support because of its wider importance to the whole shooting community. BASC SFU staff and others have many cumulative years of experience in assessing appeal cases, ensuring that lost causes are not supported and members’ money is not wasted.

The outstanding case among several supported by the Fund during 2024 was that of Mr Christopher Sharp. He had a minor dispute over some trees with his neighbour, who then attacked him on his own drive. Although he was the victim of an assault, Kent Police revoked Mr Sharp’s certificates. BASC reviewed the case, determined that it met the Fund criteria and supported it. Leading counsel was briefed and ultimately the court allowed the appeal, overturning the chief officer’s decision. In an unprecedented move, the learned judge made a costs order for £17,000 against the police. Such orders are always an indication of judicial dissatisfaction with the way that the police handled matters.

IMAGES: MARK BEDDIE

Evidence and environmental law

A strong evidence base around the impacts and benefits of shooting and shooting-related activities is key to shaping conservation efforts, policy decisions and laws and regulations to support sustainable shooting.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Build a comprehensive evidence base around our quarry species and the impacts and benefits of shooting and shooting-related activities.
- Enhance engagement with public and private stakeholders and become respected partners and 'go to' experts on all issues related to sustainable shooting.
- Defend shooting through the provision of legal and scientific expertise in legal challenges and the political discourse.
- Educate our membership and the general public on our quarry species, sustainable shooting and the impacts and benefits of shooting.

Activity in 2024

The evidence and environmental law team blazed a trail with innovative research projects in 2024. The projects help fill in existing knowledge gaps to support sustainable shooting, including the environmental benefits it can provide.

In collaboration with researchers from the University of Essex, the GWCT and Adonis Blue Environmental Consultants we set up a novel fieldwork study to assess dispersal habits of reared and released mallard.

We ringed around 1,300 released mallard on five shoots in Essex and Suffolk and are currently assessing ring recovery data. In addition, following the 2024/2025 shooting season we GPS tagged a sample of our ringed ducks to study their sedentary and/or dispersal behaviour.

We further commissioned research to a conglomerate of researchers from Oxford Systematic Reviews LLP (OXSREV) who, using satellite data, highlighted the structural diversity of woodlands and the extent of hedgerows on a large set of shooting sites compared to areas without a shoot. At the time of writing, we are preparing the publications of the astounding findings of this study.

Together with a group of researchers at the University of Exeter, the team has established a revolutionary shoot planner that will soon allow shoot captains and gamekeepers to optimise shoot dates, bag sizes, and release numbers to maximise profits and minimise financial and ecological waste.

The team also had its finger on the pulse of relevant law and policy, with over 40 engagements with policy makers and regulators in 2024 alone.

We supported the BASC Scotland team to ensure the new Wildlife Management and Muirburn Act 2024 is interpreted correctly and does not create undue and unintended problems for grouse moor managers.

We also developed and submitted strong legal arguments to policy makers against NatureScot's ill-constructed proposal for Deer Management Nature Restoration Orders (DMNROs) that risk legal interference for landowners that cannot be justified.

In the closing month of 2024, we welcomed Dr Patrick O'Reilly, our new head of social science. Patrick's work will mainly focus on public acceptance of shooting as well as sustainability aspects of all shooting disciplines.

All our scientific and legal work is supported by empirical evidence provided by membership surveys, such as the Value of Shooting survey, as well as more targeted surveys. This data helps establish how our membership operates and what policy makers can and should learn from our practitioners on the ground.

Looking ahead

In 2025, we continue to support our Scottish team on legislative and policy matters including deer management, grouse licensing and land use reform. In England and Wales our focus will be on the regulatory framework covering gamebird releases and associated activities, particularly on and around protected sites.

We have started work on Defra's new land use framework that will shape the English countryside for years to come.

On the research front we will continue to establish a stronger evidence base to support sustainable shooting. In 2025, the focus will be on wetlands, as we aim to assess their extent and quality on areas with a shoot.

We have also set up a range of research projects for the benefit of our quarry species, particularly wildfowl and waders. This will complement our ongoing studies, including the wing survey, the duck nest and sarcocystosis monitoring projects and our inaugural research on reared and released mallard.



Game and wildlife management

The game and wildlife management team specialises in a diverse range of areas, from gamebird rearing, pest and predator control, and shoot management, to cover crops and all aspects of gundog ownership.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure a sustainable future for game shooting and game management.
- Promote high standards and good game and wildlife conservation practices.
- Provide guidance on all aspects of game, habitat and shoot management.
- Work with and advise government agencies on aspects of game shooting and game management.
- Provide shooters, gundog owners and gamekeepers with professional, full-time representation.
- Ensure gamekeeping and game shooting activities are treated proportionally within exotic disease planning and disease outbreak management.

Activity in 2024

Members of the team continued to represent BASC members and the wider shooting community across a diverse range of areas, engaging with various stakeholders such as politicians, civil servants, government agencies and other organisations. This included responding to consultations, providing briefings and attending meetings. We also worked to promote the benefits of sustainable shooting to the wider public. Another essential focus was ensuring that members received up-to-date advice and support.

In 2024, we continued to collaborate with relevant stakeholders regarding the release of pheasants and red-legged partridges on and around European protected areas in England following the issues related to avian influenza in the previous year.

Avian influenza remained a significant workstream. We were there to ensure BASC members and the wider shooting sector were kept informed and correctly represented.

Members of the team continued to serve as the gamekeeping sector's representative with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU). In 2024, we undertook key work relating to important changes to the use of rodenticides and worked with others in the sector to update the relevant course for gamekeepers.

Following changes to legislation in Scotland, we assisted

colleagues in reviewing course content and the process for gaining accreditation, which will be required in the future for using spring and corvid traps. We also provided advice on licensing matters for wild bird control and bespoke support to several members regarding individual licence applications.

While continuing to oversee the production of relevant publications, we also provide the secretariat for the shooting sector's overarching standard: the Code of Good Shooting Practice.

We continued to engage with statutory agencies across a wide range of areas, from licensing and consenting, to Natural England's work on hen harrier recovery, which BASC financially supports. Tackling the minority who engage in illegal activities related to birds of prey remains a priority, as does combating other forms of wildlife and rural crime. In relation to this we work extensively with others, including the police.

Working dogs are a core area for BASC and we work with other stakeholders to promote them as an integral part of sustainable shooting. In addition to BASC's own gundog events we collaborated with more than 20 gundog clubs across the UK and supported several other major events, including all five field trial championships. A highlight was once again organising the gamekeepers' rings at Crufts, which garnered extensive media coverage and promoted working gundogs as well as the whole shooting community on a national stage.

Looking ahead

Many of our workflows will continue into 2025. Gamebird release will be a major focus for the team. Our work on avian influenza will also remain a priority to ensure that the gamebird sector is appropriately represented and considered in any decisions made.

With a change in government and many new MPs at Westminster, a key priority will be working with the BASC political team to ensure they are properly briefed on key issues to prevent misinformation. Representing and supporting our members will remain at the forefront of our work.



CASE STUDY

Poaching

In 2024, we saw several news stories highlighting the serious impact that poaching and illegal hare coursing have on individuals, communities, and wildlife. BASC has a long history of working with the police to tackle such crimes. Members of the game and wildlife team work closely with the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) and individual forces by attending relevant priority delivery groups and providing training and advice.

However, a significant challenge in tackling these crimes remains ensuring that officers possess the necessary knowledge to respond effectively. Unfortunately, the current system of in-person training is limited by costs and operational constraints for individual police forces. As a result, the NWCU is developing a digital training academy.

Through our Legacy Fund, BASC has provided £40,000 to fund the poaching module. This new approach will allow police officers to access the latest training at any time, with this resource available on demand. By equipping officers with the tools and knowledge they need, we aim to support better prevention, enforcement and, ultimately, justice for victims of such crimes.

IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/MIKELANE45

Deer and woodland management

The BASC deer team promotes sustainable deer management across the UK by providing advice to members on habitat and species management, developing and supporting best practice, offering deer stalking opportunities and influencing government policy in order to protect shooting.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Provide opportunities for deer stalkers of all abilities to improve their knowledge and skills.
- Promote the public benefits delivered by deer management, primarily the protection of trees and the provision of venison.
- Influence the future of deer management across each country.
- Ensure that best practice is demonstrated by all in the sustainable management of wild deer populations.

Activity in 2024

BASC is the main representative body for deer stalkers, with around 52,500 (35 per cent) members involved in deer management. As such we contribute to the formulation of government policy and ensure that all decision makers are aware that the most effective and humane method of managing deer and feral wild boar is culling by shooting.

We continue to try to influence each nation's government policy regarding deer management. With a change of government in England, the publication of an England Deer Strategy has not materialised. In Scotland, we saw a new consultation in 2024 on managing deer for nature and climate. This introduced the concept of Deer Management Nature Restoration Orders (DMNROs), extended female seasons and mandatory testing for all deer stalkers. BASC put in a detailed response to the consultation and has had meetings with the minister. We have already seen a reversal on female seasons which will stay as they are but we await to see what will come forth as legislation in 2025.

The British Quality Wild Venison assurance scheme is starting to gain traction, with four of the main Approved Game Handling Establishments signing up to the standard. BASC is running a group scheme that will enable deer stalkers to join the standard as small producers. It is hoped that this scheme will open the doors to buyers from supermarkets and public bodies. We firmly believe that to increase the demand for venison we need to make it more accessible.

We continue to collaborate with the other main deer

management training organisations that form Deer Management Qualifications Ltd (DMQ) to develop a range of new courses. A new Humane Animal Dispatch (HAD) course was developed in conjunction with Hampshire Police, who we also worked with to encourage other police forces to adopt the Hampshire model of using trained volunteers to undertake humane dispatch of deer involved in RTAs.

The BASC deer advisor is the editor of the Deer Initiative Partnership Best Practice Guides and has taken on the Herculean task of reviewing and revising all 70 plus of them. To date, 32 have been updated. This work is supported by a cross-sector working group providing specialist input into each guide and a £10k grant from the Forestry Commission.

The BASC Register of Competent Deer Stalkers continues to grow, with more than 900 members signed up. We are also getting growing interest from landowners who are looking to use the register to find a suitable deer manager for their property. We use the register to find potential mentors for many of our members who successfully complete the Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1 (DSCI) but require hands-on practical experience to develop their skills.

Our stalking schemes continue to be popular with members. We introduced a new scheme in the Eastern region, giving us three schemes in England and one in Northern Ireland.

Looking ahead

In 2025, we will update the information on more than 50,000 BASC members who are active deer stalkers. This represents most of the deer stalkers in the UK and therefore provides a valuable insight into the activities of the deer management sector. Our last survey in 2020 has been used heavily to inform and influence government policy in each nation, as it shows the critical importance of recreational/voluntary deer stalkers in managing the UK's deer populations. We are also working on a series of case studies that will highlight how deer managers can open up local supply chains and add value to the venison that they produce. Many stalkers are struggling to move carcasses through the game dealer networks and need to find their own outlets.

A photograph of two hunters in a forest. One hunter is wearing a camouflage jacket and a green beanie, and the other is wearing a brown jacket and a tan beanie. They are both holding rifles and are walking through a field of tall grass and small plants. In the background, there are many tall, thin trees, some of which are bare and some are evergreen. The sky is overcast.

CASE STUDY

The mentoring initiative

In 2024, we enlisted the help of BASC members who hold their DSC2 to act as mentors and provide practical guidance and instruction to those who have completed DSC1.

DSC2 holders can add their details to the register and indicate they are willing to take on a trainee. So, when a DSC1 holder is trying to find a mentor, we will contact those local to them who are on the register and put them in touch. So far we have matched more than 40 trainees to mentors and in most cases these relationships are still going strong.

Sam from Yorkshire is a good example and here's what he had to say about his experience: "Thank you for putting me in touch with Dave. He has been invaluable in furthering my skills and knowledge of deer stalking. I believe the programme really helps transfer some of the knowledge of more seasoned stalkers onto the future generations.

"Dave made the experience of stalking and shooting my first roe extremely special. His willingness to share with me his time, experience and shooting ground, truly embodies what I believe the mentorship programme was set out to achieve. I hope I can find more stalkers like Dave willing to share their knowledge, and that I can repay this by joining the mentorship register myself in the future."

Wildfowl and wetlands

The wildfowl and wetlands department supports our affiliated wildfowling clubs, BASC members and our region and country colleagues with all matters relating to wildfowling, wildfowl and wetlands. We aspire to enhance the environment through sustainable wildfowl shooting, ensuring a lasting legacy.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Work proactively to secure a long-term future for sustainable wildfowl shooting.
- Promote high standards and sound moral ethics.
- Increase participation and highlight the value of sustainable wildfowl shooting and its associated conservation benefits.
- Collaborate with affiliated wildfowling clubs and internal/external legal and ecological experts to achieve the best possible outcome wildfowl harvest and management.
- Provide a professional, full-time, national and international representation for those involved in wildfowl shooting and conservation.
- Engage BASC members through educational and member events.
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of internal and external bodies, including UK regulators and stakeholders.
- Work with landowners such as The Crown Estate through our role on the Joint Tidal Group to ensure access to shooting areas and the conservation of vital habitats.

Activity in 2024

Many aspects of the department's work remain consistent year on year. On paper, our priority in 2024 mirrored 2023 – to deliver on sustainable shooting. However, while our overarching objective remains unchanged, our approach in 2024 differed significantly from that in 2023.

Following the completion of our new Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice for Wildfowl Quarry Species, the momentum carried into 2024 as we shifted from creation to implementation – two very different prospects. The true challenge lay in widely disseminating the code's core principles and embedding its guidance into everyday practices for those involved in wildfowl shooting. Our primary focus was to communicate its significance and promote it at every opportunity. This required proactive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including UK regulators, policymakers, partner organisations and our membership.

A critical element of our 2024 strategy was ensuring BASC members and others understood the new code. This meant delivering tailored messaging, educational content and practical guidance through various avenues – whether at a club meeting, via publications and social media, or at BASC events. Each interaction provided an opportunity to raise awareness, educate, dispel misconceptions and reinforce our commitment to responsible, sustainable and evidence-led practices.

As we move into 2025, the foundations built and progress made in 2023 and 2024 will continue to shape our ongoing advocacy for a sustainable future for wildfowl shooting.

Looking ahead

The wildfowl and wetlands department will continue to provide BASC members, BASC-affiliated wildfowling clubs and our national and regional teams with both high-level strategic and operational support. We will also explore all legal and ecological avenues to safeguard the long-term future of wildfowl harvest.

It is essential that those who harvest wildfowl – whether behind or in front of the sea wall – proactively defend our pastime by contributing to data collection and demonstrating the value of our presence on the land we frequent. We trust that the principles outlined in the Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice for Wildfowl Quarry Species will continue to be heard, adopted and actively promoted.

A major milestone in our 2025 calendar is the BASC National Wildfowling Conference, which we will talk more about in next year's Annual Review. After several years without this event, the conference will welcome wildfowling enthusiasts and leading industry experts who will discuss sustainable wildfowl harvest and species conservation.

The department will also continue supporting our affiliated clubs across the UK by working to improve and simplify the consenting processes. We remain committed to engaging with those responsible for managing our protected site networks to ensure responsible and sustainable wildfowl shooting is recognised and understood.



CASE STUDY

Sustainable shooting

Between May and November 2024, the wildfowl and wetlands department surveyed our affiliated wildfowling clubs to assess the influence of shooting on the environment. The survey aimed to gather insights on self-regulation, which is crucial for demonstrating progress toward our sustainable shooting objectives. Key findings also informed our cross-party political engagements leading up to the 4 July general election.

The newly created Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice for Wildfowl Quarry Species featured heavily in the survey, and we were delighted with the level of uptake in its first year:

- 88 per cent of respondents were aware of the code, and of those 57 per cent had formally adopted it.
- Among those that had not yet adopted it, over half had similar rules in place or planned to discuss its inclusion at AGMs.

Of the clubs implementing self-regulatory rules and restrictions, 59 per cent reported having a bag limit, with limits varying according to local conditions and specific needs.

Additionally, 50 per cent of the clubs that responded had designated 'no-shooting zones', creating wildfowl refuges and enhancing conservation efforts on club-managed land.

Mandatory bag reporting was also a key feature, with 47 per cent of clubs requiring members to submit records of their harvested birds. This data collection serves numerous purposes and allows clubs to make fully informed decisions on their approach to harvesting wildfowl.

Uplands

The uplands team promotes sustainable grouse and moorland management, working with landowners and stakeholders to protect habitats, promote best practice, and ensure the future of upland shooting.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Provide technical support and advocacy.
- Ensure upland shooting remains resilient to change.
- Tackle bird of prey crime, while promoting and supporting sustainable raptor populations.
- Ensure grouse moors are viewed as open and accessible landscapes for both shooters and non-shooters.

Activity in 2024

The 2024 breeding season faced significant challenges due to a combination of factors, including poor weather and a lack of insects at critical times. This led to potentially one of the worst seasons in nearly 20 years. However, the resilience of upland communities deserves recognition, as does the continued investment by landowners and managers who worked tirelessly during the off-season to mitigate the impact.

Late in 2024, Wild Justice launched a petition to ban driven grouse shooting. In response, BASC ran a comprehensive media campaign and mobilised its members to engage with MPs using a new infographic that highlighted the environmental, economic and social benefits of grouse shooting and moorland management. Later, BASC welcomed the government's firm response, confirming there are no plans to ban driven grouse shooting. The government acknowledged the role of well-managed grouse shooting in supporting rural economies, creating employment opportunities and contributing to wildlife conservation.

Challenges extended beyond this petition. In 2023, United Utilities (UU) decided not to renew shooting leases on its land. Following intervention by BASC and other organisations, UU commissioned an independent consultant to review all shoots while temporarily securing shoot tenancies during this process. Although the review was scheduled for completion in 2024, it remains ongoing, leaving uncertainty for many affected shoots.

BASC continues to build and maintain strong relationships with various organisations. It plays an active role in the Yorkshire Dales Bird of Prey Partnership and the North York

Moors National Park Upland Group, emphasising its commitment to preventing bird of prey crimes. BASC maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy on persecution and actively supports the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) Bird of Prey Crime Priority Delivery Group. Additionally, BASC contributes at the regional level by providing wildlife crime training for rural police teams and other organisations.

Furthermore, BASC leads the coordination of the Upland Partnership, working closely with key shooting and countryside organisations. This initiative promotes knowledge-sharing and collaboration to enhance conservation strategies and improve upland management. Through these collective efforts, BASC remains dedicated to responsible land stewardship, the protection of wildlife and the long-term sustainability of natural habitats.

Looking ahead

Despite the government's firm response to Wild Justice and its recognition of the vital role that well-managed grouse moors play in conservation and rural economies, it remains highly likely that the petition will progress to a formal debate. In anticipation of this, BASC's uplands and political teams are taking proactive measures to ensure MPs are thoroughly briefed. They will present comprehensive evidence and factual analysis to reinforce the case for sustainable shooting in upland areas, emphasising its ecological, economic and cultural significance. By equipping policymakers with well-substantiated arguments, the team aims to safeguard responsible land management practices and uphold the interests of those who rely on these landscapes for their livelihoods.

Let's Learn Moor is set to return to multiple venues once again, with funding from the BASC Legacy Fund and coordination by regional moorland groups and estates. These free events, open to all schools, are supported by a diverse range of partners, including national parks and emergency services. They offer students and teachers a unique opportunity to explore moorland life, discover its diverse wildlife and even taste wild food.



CASE STUDY

Engaging MPs in sustainable upland management

In early 2024, BASC invited two Labour MPs, Jon Pearce (High Peak) and Toby Perkins (Chesterfield), to visit a grouse moor in the Peak District. During their visit, gamekeepers took the opportunity to demonstrate how sustainable shooting practices in the uplands contribute significantly to key government priorities. These include nature recovery, carbon sequestration, and wildfire mitigation. By showcasing the vital role of sustainable shooting in land management, the gamekeepers illustrated how such practices can positively impact biodiversity, support carbon storage efforts and help manage wildfire risks in sensitive environments.

BASC remains dedicated to fostering dialogue with policymakers at all levels. By regularly inviting MPs, councillors and other key figures to visit moorlands, we provide them with a first-hand understanding of the ongoing conservation efforts that landowners, gamekeepers and local communities are making throughout the year. These visits are a crucial step in building awareness and support for sustainable land management practices.

Image: iStockphoto.com/Catrin Goble/EV23

Conservation and biodiversity

The biodiversity team works across the association with governments and external partners to inspire shooters to conserve and enhance the environment through their activities and for this value to be recognised in government and partner policy.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Integrate sustainable shooting and encourage enhanced delivery in line with key policy vehicles, principally the global biodiversity framework; this especially includes protecting 30 per cent of land and seas by 2030, domestic legally binding environmental targets and national environment strategies.
- Ensure agri-environmental schemes across the UK and shooting integrate smoothly to enhance the public benefits achieved from those schemes.
- Provide effective and accessible habitat advice for people who shoot, to minimise potential ecological harm and maximise the ecological benefits from their management choices.
- Publicise and advocate the current environmental value of shooting to build mainstream support.
- Provide case studies to demonstrate the benefits shooting provides to the society and the environment.

Activity in 2024

The start of 2024 saw us promoting the findings of two major reports showing the benefits of shooting for society. First was the Natural Capital benefits account for shooting, totalling some £1.1 billion across carbon sequestration, recreation, health and wellbeing and food, forestry and farming. This was followed by the Value of Shooting report which showed that shooting directly contributes £3.3bn of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy. The report also showed that £500m worth of voluntary time is spent on habitat and species management as a result of shooting.

We briefed all the main government regulators at dedicated meetings or events, including the Royal Welsh Show or The Game Fair, and had focused meetings with natural capital teams. The greater appreciation of the wider benefits of shooting allows the ministers and civil servants to make decisions that support shooting.

Come the summer of 2024 we had a new government, bringing a review of some of the major environmental policy areas. We took opportunities to demonstrate to civil servants

and ministers how sustainable shooting delivers some of the 13 legally binding targets covered by the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and how shooting enhances the uptake of valuable options in farming schemes.

We've had positive change in the farming schemes, and we still await the results of the EIP review which will continue in 2025. We have been building our collaboration with the Welsh Government on its sustainable farming scheme in parallel, identifying those opportunities where policies that support shooting add value to the scheme's objectives. Scheme officials are responding favourably to our recommendations.

Our expertise has been welcomed and effective in Defra's stakeholder group, advising them on how to protect 30 per cent of land and seas by 2030, with their scheme to register land due in 2025. At the local level, we took the decision to respond directly to all 48 Local Nature Recovery Plans as they come to consultation over 2024 and 2025. These plans, flowing from the 2021 Environment Act, require responsible authorities to determine local biodiversity priorities, map where they occur and which are the best locations for nature recovery. It is an excellent opportunity to engage with local authorities in England to demonstrate how shooting is a socio-economic driver for investment in nature recovery and should be supported in local decision-making.

Closer to our members, our regional staff continued to improve the environmental training and education content in their events and member-facing programmes. This has been supported by our communications team (see case study), providing us with new ways to explain the value and potential of shooting for environmental gains.

Looking ahead

In addition to the work described above, we will continue to engage in Scotland and Wales as they work towards nature conservation legislation, legally binding environmental targets and oversight structures similar to those in England. We will ensure farming schemes and sustainable shooting fit together well, so shoots can help drive uptake of schemes. We will be adding ecologically focused advice on hedgerows and farm wetlands to our well-respected woodland advice package.



CASE STUDY

Multi-media tools to communicate the value and potential of shooting for biodiversity and the climate

We produced our first animation in 2024 to communicate the benefits and opportunities that come with management of woodlands for shooting. With the freedom this way of providing audio-visual content gave us, we were able to clearly and attractively explain what a woodland in good condition should look like and how shooting does and can contribute towards improving it.

We've received praise from government regulators, further education providers and conservation organisations for explaining a complex topic in a simple way. Our regional teams have been using this new communication tool in their member engagement and training work, too. The response from our members has been extremely positive. Our communications team are also using these animations to drive engagement to our woodland hub of information and advice on our website.

The BASC Wildlife Fund

The BASC Wildlife Fund (BWF) provides loans for land purchase and grants for conservation projects linked to sustainable shooting in the UK and abroad, where related to UK migratory birds. In 2024, the BWF supported projects to a total value of £265,000. Loans provided for land purchase amounted to £185,000, while £80,000 was awarded for conservation projects.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Support key conservation initiatives which demonstrate how shooting actively contributes to conservation efforts and has positive impacts on the natural environment.
- Fund projects which contribute to the creation and protection of natural habitats, allowing wildfowl, game, and various animal and plant species to flourish.
- Provide financial backing for the acquisition of land for both shooting and conservation purposes, ensuring the preservation and enhancement of natural environments.
- Encourage and support BASC members in actively participating in conservation work to contribute to the fund's overall mission of preserving biodiversity and habitats.
- Invest in scientific research to strengthen the evidence base for the conservation value delivered by shooting, particularly addressing the environmental impact of live quarry shooting.

A stellar year

In October 2024, the BWF received an award for its contribution to wildlife conservation from the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE).

The award, for 'excellent contribution to the FACE Biodiversity Manifesto', recognised the BWF as the Best Fund for Wildlife Conservation. It was presented to BASC chairman and BASC Wildlife Fund trustee, Eoghan Cameron, at a meeting of the FACE General Assembly in Brussels.

Funded projects for 2024

The BWF awarded funding to a range of conservation projects in 2024, which included the following:

- **Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) Black Grouse Range Expansion** - Running over the next four years, the project aims to expand the species' current range into the North York Moors by translocating wild birds from the North Pennines.
- **Working for Waders Scotland** - Drawing on existing



IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/STEEVEALLENPHOTO

research, the project aims to create a single resource providing practical guidance and information on predator control to aid wader conservation.

- **Preston and District Wildfowlers Association's Shelduck Research** - The project will assess the suitability of wireless cameras for gathering information on behaviour, leg ring data and changes in nesting habits of shelduck in the Ribble estuary.
- **Whittlesey Wildfowlers and Conservationists loan** - This loan of £150,000 will enable the club to purchase 81 acres of SSSI marsh land.

Get in touch

If you would like to enquire about a BASC Wildlife Fund loan or conservation grant, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us via the website to discuss your project.

If you would like to donate to the fund, you can also do so via our website: bascwildlifefund.co.uk/donate

Your generosity will help to ensure thriving natural habitats for generations to come.

CASE STUDY

Wentloog funding success

February 2024 saw the BWF award its first ever loan in Wales to Wentloog Wildfowling and Conservation Association (WWCA). Totalling £35,000, the funding allowed WWCA to purchase 932 acres of foreshore in Wentloog, a rural community in the southwest of the city of Newport.

The land borders Rumney Great Wharf, an area of salt marsh located in the Severn Estuary SSSI. This habitat provides a vital winter refuge for pintail, a priority species recognised in BASC's sustainable shooting code of practice. Working with Natural Resources Wales, WWCA undertook a project to preserve this precious habitat, establishing 'polders' on the mudflats to reclaim the salt marsh from the sea.

To highlight these efforts and to promote the invaluable conservation work undertaken by wildfowlers, 'Pintail over Wentloog' will feature as the 2025 BWF habitat stamp.

Education and outreach

The education and outreach team is responsible for the creation and development of initiatives which extend BASC's engagement and participation with new audiences. Well-established programmes such as Young Shots and Women in Shooting also come under this department's scope.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Widen the accessibility and inclusivity of shooting sports by creating channels of entry, with emphasis on underrepresented groups and communities.
- Develop and coordinate innovative engagement opportunities to enable new audiences to participate in shooting and conservation activities.
- Engage with educational providers, young people and youth groups to demonstrate the entwined relationship between shooting and conservation.
- Lead on BASC's educational policy and curriculum development to support the land-based education sector, in particular game and wildlife management and conservation.

Activity in 2024

BASC continued to lobby the government and key decision makers to secure positive outcomes for land-based education courses following the defunding implications of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act.

BASC was successful in challenging the suitability of the proposed T Levels and instrumental in the push to withdraw proposed courses which were unfit for our sector. Without our intervention, the future of these imperative employment lifelines to our sector could have been lost.

Throughout 2024, we worked with a variety of key stakeholders to develop new curriculum options to support the future of gamekeeping and wildlife management courses in colleges. In England and Wales, we have developed a new Level 2 qualification in game and wildlife; in Scotland we have worked alongside Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority to develop new apprenticeship frameworks for land and nature qualifications, particularly the land and nature pathways.

Our Legacy Funded Scholarship programme was complemented by the addition of the BASC Wildlife Fund scholarship in 2024. This funding mechanism supports young people by removing financial barriers which may prevent them from progressing in their educational journey. BASC has

awarded close to £90,000 in scholarships since 2019. We have supported a range of young people studying courses at both colleges and universities. It is incredibly rewarding to watch them progress and develop and see them all achieving their dreams of working within the sector.

We had an extremely busy year with Women in Shooting which continues to grow from strength to strength. We delivered several knockout events across the country, including our 'ultimate' simulated game and deer event at Childerley Sporting, a range day at Bisley, and simulated Macnab at Gleneagles. Embedded within all our events is an educational undertone, supporting people of all experiences and skillsets to develop and learn.

Wild food is also a key focus at our events, and we've had people preparing, cooking and eating game at every opportunity. From falconry to the foreshore, BASC has promoted inclusive opportunities and supported hundreds of women to take up shooting. Many have been encouraged to try an element of field sports which is completely new to them.

Looking ahead

Continuing the work we have done in 2024, we will be lobbying decision makers, engaging with stakeholders and leading on the development of even more qualification options to support the future of gamekeeping and wildlife management courses.

Our engagement with young people throughout 2024 has been monumentally successful, with a record-breaking year. In 2025, we will look to build on our successes and also focus our efforts and put increased priority against engagement with those aged 12 years and above. Young people of this age are a key demographic of emerging social media users, petition signers and tomorrow's voters who have the ability to affect the future of shooting.



BASC to School

BASC works with schools, colleges, charities and other organisations to provide young people with opportunities to learn about the countryside and the importance of shooting through educational events delivered under its BASC to School programme. Since 2022 we have had 130,000 face-to-face educational interactions with young people and the numbers below from 2024 alone give you a sense of the scale of the programme.

- BASC engaged with **52,202** young people.
- A total of **218** events delivered across the UK.
- **4,965** Scouts and Guides tried shooting for the first time at the Essex International Jamboree.
- **2,605** primary school children ran across the moors during Let's Learn Moor.
- **796** primary and secondary school children attended Estates that Educate.
- More than **20,000** tried game meat.
- We delivered masterclasses to **40** catering colleges, promoting game meat to **899** chefs of the future.
- We visited or engaged **900** primary schools.
- We worked with **25** Young Farmers Clubs.
- **170** Young Farmers competed at the national clay shooting competitions.
- Nearly **2,500** teaching staff and their pupils attended our events.

Land management and consenting

The land management and consenting team delivers comprehensive support, including guidance on shoot management plans and wildfowling consent applications. Dedicated support is provided to the affiliated wildfowling clubs who have Crown Estate leases.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- To promote and advocate for sustainable shooting practices on and around protected sites.
- To educate about the benefits of sustainable shooting and its role in conservation and nature recovery.
- To work with landowners, conservation groups and other stakeholders to develop and implement sustainable shooting and management plans that meet the needs of both conservation and shooting interests.
- To support and provide the evidence base, along with developing practical case studies to allow research to be conducted on the impacts of shooting on wildlife and habitats, and to use this information to develop and evidence best practices for sustainable shooting.
- To provide technical support to the BASC Wildlife Fund.

Activity in 2024

The focus of the team at the start of the year was supporting 44 BASC-affiliated wildfowling clubs who have Crown Estate leases in obtaining consents for wildfowling. Overall, 29 consent submissions were made, three Crown Estate lease renewals facilitated, and 11 management plan reviews completed.

We worked with colleagues to review and where necessary respond to a wide range of consultations, such as the Defra Habitats Regulations Assessment survey and Wildlife Licence Charges consultation. Our work with conservation regulators extends to providing workshops for officers to increase their understanding of wildfowling alongside the wildfowl and wetlands team.

Together with the BASC evidence and environmental law team, we coordinated the commissioning of the Nature Recovery report – Shooting: Delivering for Conservation and Nature Recovery. This report demonstrated how shooting activities can significantly contribute to government targets by preserving habitats, creating woodlands, improving designated sites and mitigating climate change.

Team members are active on a range of committees and



IMAGE: TOP SHOTS PHOTO COMP/ALASTAIR MACPHERSON

groups working with partners. This includes working with colleagues on the Crown Estates Joint Tidal Group, and representing BASC with the National Trust and with Natural England.

Looking ahead

In 2025 the team will continue to engage with regulators and wildfowling clubs, and support clubs to utilise and complete bag returns using the Green Shoots software.

We will be supporting shoots and the BASC Wildlife Fund recipients with the implementation of shoot and habitat management plans. This will help us promote nature recovery, biodiversity and landscape connectivity. By implementing management plans, shooters can demonstrate their commitment to responsible and sustainable practices, while also safeguarding the future of shooting in the UK. This in turn will increase data collection and potential research initiatives, and support for BASC citizen science initiatives.

Our primary focus is defending and promoting sustainable shooting, while supporting BASC members.



IMAGE: TOP SHOTS PHOTO COMP/ERIC BEBBIE

Wild food

The wild food team works across BASC to ensure shooting's end product is embedded in the association's strategy. It runs the Eat Game campaign and the Eat Game Awards.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Promote game meat to the end user.
- Demonstrate the benefits of game meat to the public.
- Ensure that game meat is a priority within BASC and the supply chain by promoting best practice.

Activity in 2024

In 2024, BASC's wild food team continued to expand their outreach and educational work around wild and sustainable game meat. They hosted butchery and cookery demonstrations at key countryside events, highlighting techniques for preparing a range of wild game. Alongside these hands-on sessions, the team worked closely with local chefs and restaurants to develop new recipes and champion the versatility of game meat.

A key highlight of the year was the inaugural Wales vs Northern Ireland game meat challenge. Students from Belfast Metropolitan College and Coleg Cambria learnt about preparing game and competed for the best dish – won by the young chefs from Belfast.

Through initiatives like Eat Game, the team showcased game's environmental and nutritional benefits, encouraging the wider public to see wild food as an accessible and sustainable option. This culminated in the 2024 Eat Game Awards, the biggest ever, where Joe Mann of Queen's College in Taunton won the Champion of Champions title.

The team also produced online resources such as recipe guides and educational articles to support home cooks in sourcing and cooking game confidently. Overall, the 2024 activities helped strengthen the profile of responsibly harvested wild food and encouraged more people to include game in their everyday meals.

Looking ahead

With new ambassadors coming on board, Eat Game will continue to promote game meat as a healthy, natural, sustainable and, most importantly, tasty food source. We have built up a huge network of chefs, retailers, educators



and influencers who are helping us share the message right across the UK.

The passion from everyone we work with is there for all to see. It is essential for us to continue to develop those relationships, so we have people talking about us and our hard work – even when we are not in the room.

CASE STUDY

Eat Game Awards

The Eat Game Awards continue to go from strength-to-strength year on year, which only confirms what we already know – the work we are doing is helping to increase the awareness and demand of game meat.

The 2024 Awards were presented by Adam Henson (pictured) and saw more businesses than ever nominated, with lots of new faces, as well as old friends, and we had over 15,000 votes across the eight categories.

The awards themselves not only recognise and reward those businesses and individuals doing outstanding work, they also create an event for friendships to be made and partnerships and collaborations to be forged.

Following the event, which took place onboard a boat on the Thames, we worked with several winners to help us share our message and work with a wider audience.

A great example of this was our debut at Meatopia UK, which is described as a four-day love affair with food, drink, fire and music. We had a stand at Tobacco Dock in London and worked with the Game Influencer of the Year Cai Ap Bryn, who did daily demonstrations cooking game meat over fire. And such was his appeal he has been invited back to the 2025 event and game will be available from the food stands.



England

BASC in your area

BASC has five regional offices in England – North, Central, East, South East and South West. All regions do extensive work with local politicians, the police, media and various other stakeholders to ensure a safe future for shooting. They also run a variety of courses and events for both members and newcomers.

Activity in 2024

As we reflect on 2024, we celebrate the challenges we've overcome and the achievements we've made together. Our regional teams adapted, innovated and worked tirelessly to deliver better, more efficient services to our members.

The year began with the lingering impact of avian influenza and individual licensing issues for certain shoots in protected areas. Our teams provided continuous support and expert advice and worked closely with politicians and stakeholders to ensure fair decisions for shoots.

In 2024, we engaged with more than 400 shoots, focusing on best practices, sustainability and the economic value of shooting to the countryside and beyond.

We hosted three major gamekeeper events, with more than 300 gamekeepers attending, including the Northern event where Defra Secretary of State Steve Barclay addressed the importance of shooting and took questions from BASC members.

Our efforts to bring newcomers into shooting were a success. We held 100 introduction to shooting events, including special events like the Ultimate Women's Event for women who learned about game shooting, deer stalking and cooking wild food. We also hosted the growing Best in the Field clay shoot, receiving fantastic feedback. Our shotgun coaching lessons reached 6,000 individuals, and our training department provided more than 1,000 courses to members and businesses.

We made an impact at more than 40 shows, connecting with members and non-members. The highlight was The Game Fair at Blenheim Palace, where we set a record for memberships, featured a 100m high air balloon challenge, and delivered thousands of shotgun coaching lessons.

With a new government in power, we adapted again, focusing on building relationships with politicians to ensure future decisions about shooting are informed, evidence-based and reasonable, while explaining the wider benefits of shooting to conservation, the economy and communities.

Our unique firearms team handled more than 8,500 calls, engaged with 110 firearms licensing departments and worked with police and crime commissioners to support our members' needs.

Across the year, our regional and country teams engaged with more than 500 partners and stakeholders, promoting the benefits of shooting and conservation at every level.

Together, we're achieving great things and making a real difference. Let's keep pushing forward for the future of shooting and conservation.



Wales

BASC in your area

BASC Wales aims to provide a public voice for shooting and conservation in Wales with cross-party support in the Welsh Parliament. The team lobbies on the issues affecting shooting and conservation in Wales, which includes balanced coverage in the Welsh media. We work to defend the freedom of private firearms ownership, promote healthy quarry populations and habitats, and encourage access to shooting in Wales.

Activity in 2024

The past year has been a dynamic one for us, with a significant amount of political engagement, member interaction and conservation efforts. The team has placed a strong focus on forging relationships with members, shoots and political representatives from all parties, to ensure that shooting and conservation remain positive contributors to Wales. As part of this we continue to be proud to serve as the secretariat for the cross-party group on shooting and conservation in the Senedd.

Engagement has been our main driver, and we've introduced politicians to clay pigeon shooting, conservation projects and even the joys of locally sourced game meat. These efforts aim to build a broader understanding of the positive contributions that shooting activities make to rural communities and conservation. In addition, we have attended political party conferences, further raising the profile of BASC and shooting.

We have been developing new membership engagement events, including a successful collaboration with British Shooting. These events have provided valuable opportunities for members to connect, share experiences and learn about new areas of our community.

To address pressing concerns within the shooting community, the team has conducted several shoot briefings on sustainable ammunition and the future of our community. These briefings were designed to ensure that members are informed and equipped to navigate upcoming changes.

Additionally, we've participated in consultations on key issues, such as the sustainable farming scheme, making our voice heard in important policy discussions. Further contributing to our mission, we have also worked with all four police forces across Wales to ensure our members receive the best possible service. Alongside this we have also assisted members with hundreds of firearms enquiries.

This year's collaborative initiative with our colleagues from Northern Ireland was an excellent platform to showcase the talents of the catering and hospitality students from Belfast Metropolitan College and Coleg Cambria Wrexham in a game cookery competition held in November in Northern Ireland. The competition is set to return in 2025.

Finally, the team helped make 750 bird boxes with Scouts from all over Wales at their All-Wales Scout Camp, promoting both conservation and youth engagement. It was a thoroughly successful and rewarding experience.

It has been an eventful year in Wales, marked by continued growth, active engagement and strong advocacy for shooting and conservation. We remain committed to supporting our members and the wider shooting community, ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.



Image: iStockphoto.com/Pavel Bednarski

Scotland

BASC in your area

BASC Scotland is well placed to deal with the many important shooting and conservation issues affecting people living in and visiting Scotland. Team members also specialise in firearms-related issues in Scotland. They engage extensively at Scottish Government, Holyrood and Westminster levels, highlighting and influencing change in key issues affecting the Scottish shooting and conservation sector.

Activity in 2024

The year 2024 was dominated primarily by scrutiny of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill. We spent time engaging and lobbying numerous ministers and MSPs both in the Scottish Parliament face-to-face or via exhibitions at Holyrood and by various one-to-one visits on numerous estates across both Aberdeenshire and Angus. BASC successfully led on this bill and secured significant amendments which benefit our members. We managed to remove the disproportionate powers around grouse shoot licence suspension and ensured we had the licence period extended from one to five years.

BASC was also successful in ensuring NatureScot implemented licences by grouse shoot area and not across an entire landholding following the passage of the bill. Accordingly, licences were modified successfully. Crucially, we secured a fundamental change which will benefit those holding grouse shoot licences, many of whom are our members.

We also attended all the mainstream political party conferences, notably the SNP, Scottish Labour and Scottish Conservative conferences, holding informative fringe events with political presence to highlight the importance of sustainable land management and rural communities.

We hosted and participated in many events in the Scottish Parliament, including an exhibition displaying the positive benefits of community-integrated deer management. A reception in December highlighted the issues with the Scottish Government's consultation into deer management changes through the Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill. We also contributed detailed evidence to all relevant consultations and calls for views.

At the Scottish Game Fair, we bolstered our presence with a much larger stand and extensive event programme which showcased the very best of BASC.

BASC Scotland took part in the Estates that Educate initiative across the summer months, attended by more than 2,000 children over five days. These hands-on experiences provide young participants with valuable insights into sustainable land management and conservation practices. We also hosted Hill to Grill days in conjunction with moorland groups at schools from Perthshire to Fife.

BASC Scotland was busy across the country delivering training courses for spring and corvid traps ahead of licensing being brought in as a result of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024.

Country Sport Scotland (CSS) was acquired by BASC this year and has since grown significantly in membership and prominence. CSS showcases the very best of Scotland's country sports tourism opportunities and promotes shooting and conservation to both a domestic and international market.



Northern Ireland

BASC in your area

BASC Northern Ireland (NI) is widely recognised not only for its success in resolving members' firearms licensing issues, but also for wider work on NI firearms and wildlife legislation. The team's work throughout NI is supported by BASC colleagues in head office across all departments, which is why BASC is the organisation that is best placed to promote and protect all aspects of shooting in Northern Ireland.

Activity in 2024

Our team has worked hard to maintain and build good working relationships with influential Members of the Legislative Assembly and ministers, highlighting the many benefits that shooting and conservation bring to Northern Ireland. We have also highlighted our concerns regarding the potential detrimental impact on shooting that yet another attempt to ban the hunting of wild mammals with dogs will bring.

BASC NI director Tommy Mayne has continued to chair the Northern Ireland Firearms Representative Group (NIFRG), which consists of ten shooting and countryside organisations. Under BASC's leadership, the NIFRG travelled to the Republic of Ireland to meet with its counterpart, the Firearms Users Representative Group (FURG), which consists of 15 shooting and countryside organisations. The meeting provided an opportunity to share expertise and experience, allowing both organisations to robustly meet the challenges that lie ahead in their jurisdictions.

Our sustainable ammunition day at Cleggan Estate, Co Antrim was a prestige event. Guests included estate owners, gamekeepers, firearms dealers and others from the world of game shooting. They had the opportunity to try a wide range of cartridges from several manufacturers including Lyalvale Express, BioAmmo, Eley, Gamebore, and Jocker using Cleggan's simulated game targets. With presentations from Lars Thune Andersen of the Danish Hunters' Association and BASC experts, many myths around the effectiveness of sustainable ammunition were dispelled.

Working closely with the BASC Wales team, we hosted the game-themed Northern Ireland v Wales Cookery and Hospitality Challenge, featuring trainee chefs and front-of-house students from Belfast Metropolitan College and Colleg Cambria in Wales. Prior to the competition, which was won by the Belfast Met team, the students enjoyed an educational trip to Baronscourt Estate, where they learnt about game shooting, deer management and conservation, followed by a tour of the larder where they witnessed game being processed.

We have continued to provide the highest level of member representation, particularly on firearms related issues. Our success in this area is widely recognised, and BASC continues to be seen as the go-to organisation on such matters. We have also provided support and advice to our trade member firearms dealers, assisting them in their dealings with both the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Justice.

We ran a schedule of pop-up events at firearms dealers' premises, providing advice and guidance to members across a wide range of issues. We also ran a very successful Women in Shooting Day, a Young Shots Activity Day, a Shotgun Coaching Day, two DSC1 courses and an Intermediate Deer Stalking Course at Baronscourt Estate.



IMAGE: iStockphoto.com/ROGER BRADLEY

Insurance

BASC insurance provides a specially tailored insurance package for shooters. It covers a wide range of BASC recreational activities, from wildfowling and deer stalking to airgunning and ferreting.

BASC member insurance covers more than just shooting...

We know that our members take part in a wide range of country pursuits, and we want to be there to help when they need us.

BASC insurance is a 'first resort' policy, meaning we handle claims directly, regardless of any other cover you may have. Any contributions from other insurers are sought in the background, without delaying settlement. This is in contrast to many 'last resort' policies, which require proof that no other cover exists before responding to a claim.

With BASC liability insurance you automatically receive:

- up to £10 million public liability cover;
- up to £10 million employer liability cover; and
- up to £10 million product liability cover.

The policies provide worldwide cover (excluding North America and Canada) with a limitation of 90 days to cover holidays for members residing permanently in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

In addition, BASC liability insurance provides cover for:

- humane dispatch (excluding humane dispatch of owned farm stock or domestic animals); and
- the sale of meat or other small income derived from such recreational shooting activities (providing this is not your primary source of income).



IMAGE: TOP SHOTS PHOTO COMP/LUCY MARSDEN

As well as liability insurance, BASC membership also includes personal accident insurance of up to £50,000, covering personal accidents resulting in the loss of sight, hearing, or limbs and any other permanent type of disablement while engaged in BASC recreational activities. If you're a gamekeeper or river keeper member, the personal accident insurance is extended to cover you 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Affiliated club and syndicate member cover includes:

- additional guest insurance cover, tailored to their specific shooting discipline;

- additional public liability related to fundraising or education and awareness raising events. For example, if you wanted to put on a clay shoot to raise awareness and funds, as long as you notify BASC of the event taking place, this element of the insurance will cover you; and
- access to additional dog injury protection. If a working dog is injured as a result of your club's or syndicate's negligence, then the cover will respond up to a cost of £2,500 per incident.

BASC is a trading name of British Association for Shooting and Conservation which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under firm reference number 311937. You may check this on the Financial Services Register by visiting the FCA's website or by contacting the FCA on 0800 111 6768



Member benefits

At BASC we campaign for the future of our way of life, but our members also benefit from a wide range of exceptional products and services.

Fundamentally, as an organisation, we are driven by the needs of our members. Whether we're providing expert advice, training opportunities, pathways into shooting, or advocacy and representation at all levels of government, BASC members are at the heart of our decision making.

Through understanding the needs of our members, we have been able to develop our first-resort insurance product which has been specifically designed to support BASC members when taking part in recreational country pursuits. If you'd like to learn more about our insurance, turn to page 42.

In 2024, we saw another summer season where members attended the National Shooting Show and The Game Fair using their complimentary BASC member tickets. On behalf of our trade members, we also secured special rates to attend and exhibit at both shows.

Our member offers

We know our members need specific equipment, support and assurances when out in the field, which has guided us to build strong partnerships with key businesses, negotiating discounts on products ranging from vehicles and dog training equipment to shooting accessories.

What is the value to BASC members?

BASC members saved more than £1.8 million on the purchase of new vehicles from 22 manufacturers in 2024. Over the year, our members continued to access excellent deals on a wide range of products including vehicles, gundog accessories, bespoke insurances, books, hearing protection and more*.

BASC continues to work with a number of bespoke insurance brokers and underwriters to enable those who shoot to access policies that cover aspects of shooting not usually covered by standard policies. Some of these include BASC Working Dog Insurance, gun and rifle insurance and shoot cancellation insurance.

The opportunity for BASC trade members to market their products to an average of 130,000 BASC members through paid-for bespoke monthly email distribution has continued to grow in popularity, providing trade members with a high-quality audience marketing and BASC with an additional stream of income.

On behalf of BASC and our partners, we would like to thank those members who have taken advantage of their offers and contributed to the ongoing success of the organisation.



*T&Cs apply for a number of our member offers

Working together

Collaboration with various organisations and partners is a key element of our strategy to achieve our objectives. BASC works with all political parties, parliamentary groups, legislative bodies, government departments (through their ministers and senior staff), police committees and many organisations with an interest in shooting, nature and conservation. We routinely produce evidence-based briefings for policymakers and MPs.

What BASC does

- We provide the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and Conservation.
- We have a partnership agreement with Natural England.
- We co-host receptions at the Conservative and Labour party conferences with the Angling Trust.
- We work on European legislation on firearms, shooting and conservation with the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE).
- We are one of the partners within Aim to Sustain, which was launched in 2021, and we sit on the British Shooting Sports Council.
- We work with the UK Squirrel Accord to enhance woodland health and red squirrel recovery through grey squirrel and woodland management.

BASC's ability to work with such a wide range of stakeholders demonstrates the flexibility of our community and broadness of our interests and goals. Our openness and readiness to engage at all times sends a very powerful message.

A few of the key organisations BASC continues to work with...



Sponsorship

We understand that to best serve our members and the wider shooting community, we must work collaboratively and innovatively with our official sponsors. Throughout 2024, we proudly worked alongside Eley Hawk, Browning, BSA, Leica, Promatic, Skinner's and Sporting Saint in the delivery of our courses, training and events. Through the provision of essential products and funding, our sponsors have allowed us to deliver effective initiatives across the UK.

We thank our sponsors for their generous support and commit to continuing to uphold these vital working relationships for the benefit of the shooting community.



BASC's financial position at the end of 2024

The group's statements of comprehensive income and financial position are laid out here. The group includes the association and its subsidiary, BASC Direct Limited. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation Limited is a registered society, no. 28488R.

A full copy of the report of the Executive and Finance Committee and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024 is available on the BASC website (basc.org.uk/agm). Hard copies are available by post. In order to receive a hard copy, please contact BASC reception on 01244 573 000.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover	12,869,540	12,577,340
Gross profit	12,869,540	12,577,340
Administrative expenses	(14,132,746)	(13,657,566)
Fair value movements	669,447	582,120
Operating loss	(593,759)	(498,106)
Interest receivable and similar income	160,417	123,291
Loss before taxation	(433,342)	(374,815)
Tax on loss	(86,330)	(128,404)
Loss for the financial year	(519,672)	(503,219)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(519,672)	(503,219)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed Assets		
Intangible assets	16,329	27,876
Tangible assets	2,545,141	2,156,048
Heritage assets	486,736	481,736
	<u>3,048,206</u>	<u>2,665,660</u>
Current Assets		
Stocks	12,085	6,470
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	3,972,360	3,679,346
Current asset investments	8,763,008	8,750,386
Cash at bank and in hand	3,762,533	4,597,153
	<u>16,509,986</u>	<u>17,033,355</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(8,692,434)	(8,353,507)
Net Current Assets	7,817,552	8,679,848
Total assets less current liabilities	10,865,758	11,345,508
Deferred taxation	(97,365)	(57,443)
	<u>(97,365)</u>	<u>(57,443)</u>
Net assets	10,768,393	11,288,065
Capital and reserves		
Revaluation reserve	915,481	915,481
Legacy fund	348,004	489,092
Fighting fund	146,389	276,937
BASC Wildlife fund	721,094	711,652
Profit and loss account	8,637,425	8,894,903
	<u>10,768,393</u>	<u>11,288,065</u>

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