

Gamekeeper survey 2020

Run in partnership with the Countryside Alliance (CA), Game Farmers Association (GFA) and the National Gamekeeper's Organisation (NGO).



Introduction

A short survey was requested to try and ascertain the level and type of abuse gamekeepers have directed to them by members of the public, and to establish what wildlife crime/unlawful activity is carried out by the public on shooting land.

The survey weblink was sent to a sample of 2,372 BASC gamekeeper members (who are willing to receive surveys) via fast track and was also distributed by The National Gamekeepers Organisation, The Countryside Alliance and The Game Farmers Association. Each organisation was provided with an individual weblink to enable us to ascertain which organisation the respondents came from. The survey was completely anonymous.

The survey was distributed by BASC at 9am on 30th November 2020 and closed at 12 noon on 14th December 2020. A reminder was sent by BASC on Friday 11th December 2020. At the time of closing there were a total of 1,048 responses (BASC = 658 / NGO = 372 / GFA = 12 / CA = 6).

Key results

Q1. As a gamekeeper have you ever experienced abuse / threats from people outside your profession because of your occupation?

Total respondents:

- Responses: **YES = 64%** (n=667) (Directed to Q2) **No= 36%** (n=381) (Directed to Q5)

Q2. Please indicate the types of abuse/threat you have experienced – Respondents were asked to tick all that apply.

- Verbal = **61%** (n=642)
- Physical = **15%** (n=154)
- Online (social media) = **18%** (n=192)
- Letters = **3%** (n=36)
- Other = **3%** (n=30)

Those respondents who selected 'other' were asked to expand on their answer. Their responses (n=29) have been categorized for ease of analysis and can be seen in table 3.

Table 3

Other types of abuse/threats received - CATEGORISED (n=29)	Number	%
Verbal / Intimidation	8	28
Property damage / vandalism	7	24
Equipment damage	3	10
Theft	3	10
Threat of arson	3	10
Graffiti	2	7
Dogs out of control	1	3
Physical	1	3
Politicians	1	3

Q3. How many incidents of abuse/threats have you experienced during the last 12 months as a gamekeeper?

Table 4 shows respondents suffered the majority of incidents between 1-10 times in the last 12 months.

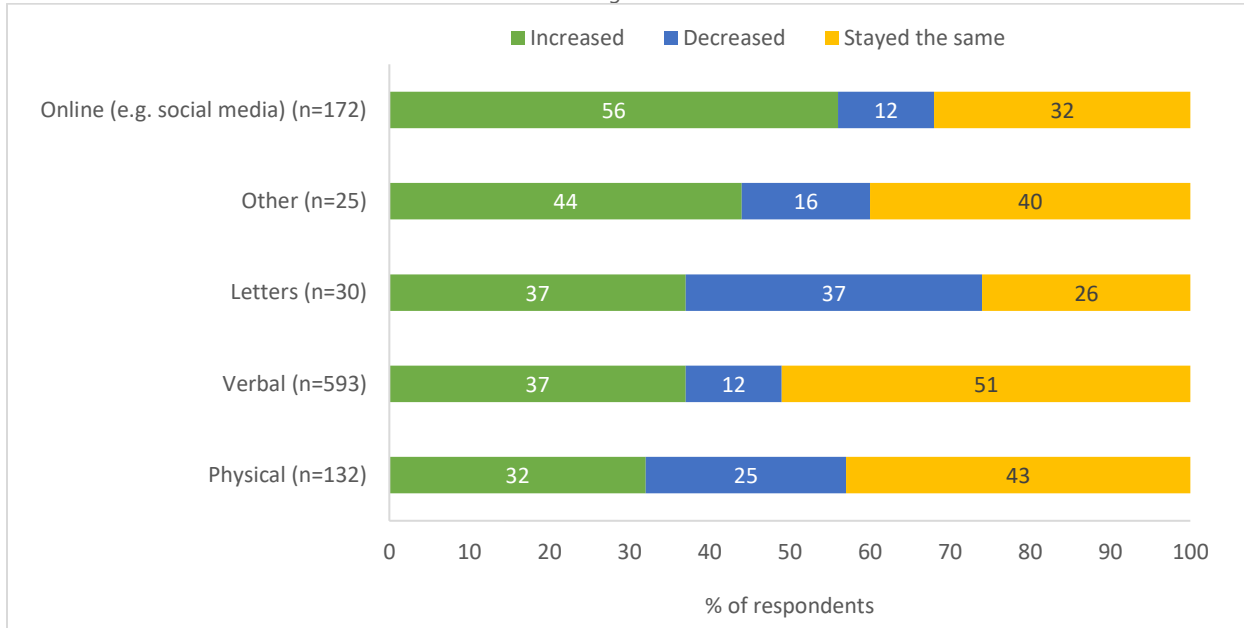
Table 4

Number of incidents of threats and abuse – frequency ranges	Verbal	Physical	Online	Letters	other
0	9% (n=52)	23% (n=28)	23% (n=28)	29% (n=8)	28% (n=28)
1 to 10	80% (n=454)	74% (n=89)	74% (n=89)	71% (n=20)	64% (n=16)
11 to 20	7% (n=38)	2% (n=2)	2% (n=2)	0	4% (n=1)
21 to 30	2% (n=10)	0	1% (n=1)	0	0
31 to 50	1% (n=4)	1% (n=1)	3% (n=5)	0	0
50+	1% (n=6)	0	6% (n=8)	0	4% (n=1)

Q4. Has the number of incidents you have experienced increased or decreased compared to previous years?

Most respondents indicated the number of verbal and physical incidents stayed the same as previous years. However, many respondents explained the number of online incidents had increased in the last 12 months.

Figure 1



Q5. As a gamekeeper have you ever witnessed an act of wildlife crime by a member of the public on the ground you work on?

- Responses: **YES = 59%** (n=584) (Directed to Q6) **No = 41%** (n=405) (Directed to Q7)

Q6. Please indicate the type(s) of wildlife crime you have witnessed – Respondents were asked to tick all that apply.

Respondents were provided with a list of different forms of wildlife crime and asked to choose all they have been witness to. All 'other' responses were categorised for ease of analysis and can be seen in Table 7.

Table 6

Respondents could tick all that apply	Number
Hare coursing	414
Poaching deer	345
Poaching game birds	321
Disturbance of nesting birds	272
Poaching fish	118
Other - See table 7	92
Badger baiting	64
Illegal trap setting	59
Raptor persecution	24

Table 7

Other wildlife crime – CATEGORISED (n=91)	Number
Damage to traps	21
Livestock disturbance/scaring by dogs	13
Killing or tampering with gamebirds	8
Pet dogs chasing wildlife	8
Uncontrolled dogs	7
Misc	7
Coursing - Hares / Deer	6
Damage to equipment / private property / land	5
Fly tipping	4
Poaching	4
Digging /ferreting without permission	3
Trespassing	3
Fox releases	2

Q7. As a gamekeeper have you ever witnessed any unlawful activity by a member of the public targeted at shoot related activities?

- Answer: **YES = 61% (n=595)** (Directed to Q8) **No= 39% (n=379)** (Directed to Q9)

Q8. Please indicate the types of unlawful activity you have witnessed – Respondents were asked to tick all that apply.

Respondents were provided with a list of different forms of unlawful activity and asked to choose all they have been witness to (see table 9). All the 'other' responses were categorised for ease of analysis and can be seen in Table 10.

Table 9

Respondents could tick all that apply	Number
Trespass	506
Machinery theft	183
Vandalism	464
Deliberate damage of legally set traps	413
Fly tipping	400
Unlawful vehicular access	449
Other – see table 10	63

Table 10

Other unlawful activity – CATEGORISED (n=63)	Number
Damage to equipment / private property / land	15
Trespassing / disturbance / saboteurs	10
Theft	7
Killing or tampering with gamebirds / wildlife	6
Misc	6
Coursing - Hares / Deer	5
Poaching	4
Arson	3
Uncontrolled dogs	3
Verbal abuse	3

Q9. In which country of the UK do you work as a gamekeeper?

- England = **85%** (n=814)
- Northern Ireland = **1%** (n=10)
- Scotland = **11%** (n=104)
- Wales = **3%** (n=31)

Q10. Any other comments (n=220)

The full list of 'Any other comments' were categorised for ease of analysis and the results can be seen below.

Any other comments (n=220)	Number	%
Suffered damage, threats, deliberate acts of trespass with dogs and theft	40	18
Require better Police response	36	16
Walkers, general public and dog walkers have all increased – with no regard for the countryside.	29	13
Misc	27	12
Issues have increased since lockdown - walkers, dogs etc.	22	10
More education for the public is required - many may/do accept the work done when it is explained	15	7
Police need more resources and training	11	5
Coursing issues	7	3
The responsible work of shooters needs to be heard more to counteract the incorrect messages spread by others	7	3
Laws need updating	6	3
Most issues are caused by travellers	5	2
Increased online harassment and abuse	4	2
None or N/A	4	2
Do not advertise job role to others - work discretely to stay undetected	3	1
Witnessed / suffered crimes and abuse by other country sports people	3	1
Unhappy in employment	1	0

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