



WILDFOWLING

Permits and handbook

2024/2025





Image: Top Shots photo comp 2022/Elliot Roberts

BASC wildfowling permits

The BASC wildfowling permit scheme is an exclusive benefit for BASC members. BASC membership offers many other benefits.

Benefits of BASC membership

- Free access to expert advice on all aspects of shooting
- A powerful voice for the defence of shooting
- Full-colour magazines six times a year
- A vast range of member offers from numerous brands
- Opportunities for wildfowling, stalking, game and clay shooting and airgunning
- Comprehensive insurance package (£10m third party cover)

To join BASC now, please ring the membership hotline on 01244 573 030

BASC is a trading name of British Association for Shooting and Conservation which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) reference number 311937.

Cover image: ARC Photography

Introduction		4
Wildfowling clubs and reserves 2024/2025		5
1	1.1 Clubs/reserves locations 1.2 Clubs/reserves 1.3 Scotland 1.4 Northern Ireland 1.5 Wales 1.6 Northern England 1.7 East and South East England 1.8 South and South West England	
Wildfowling and the law		23
2	2.1 Shooting on the foreshore – England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2.2 Crown Estate foreshore – England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2.3 Shooting on the foreshore – Scotland 2.4 Chapters of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 as amended 2011, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 2.5 Sustainable shooting 2.6 Wildfowl shooting and severe weather	
Non-lead shot information		33
3	3.1 Restrictions on lead shot 3.2 Non-lead shot substitutes	
Fieldcraft		36
4	4.1 Wildfowling Code of Practice 4.2 Using a compass on the marsh 4.3 Tides and tide tables 4.4 The Beaufort wind scale 4.5 Biosecurity: shooting and the countryside	
Wild food		47
5	5.1 Preparation 5.2 Recipes	
Research		52
6	6.1 Wing survey 6.2 Ring recovery 6.3 Rice breast (Sarcocystosis) 6.4 Duck Nest Monitoring Project 6.5 Wetland Bird Survey (WeBs)	
Further information		56
7	7.1 Wildfowling information 7.2 Wildfowling clubs	

Introduction

This booklet contains details of the scheme, which is designed for those new to wildfowling and experienced wildfowlers alike. It includes information on where you can obtain wildfowling permits in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These permits are offered by BASC-affiliated clubs, local authorities and other organisations. If you would like to try wildfowling for the first time, or in a new area, then this booklet will give you the necessary information, including contact details for individual representatives of the relevant organisation.

Also contained in this booklet are informative sections on wildfowling and the law, fieldcraft – invaluable for a safe and successful wildfowling trip – the legal restrictions, various non-lead alternatives, how to shoot sustainably and further sources of wildfowling related information.

BASC research has revealed what wildfowlers think about the permit scheme: 89.5% found the club they contacted helpful; 94.7% want to use the scheme again; 96.5% would recommend the scheme to others; 86% felt confident enough to go wildfowling on their own. Most members had heard about the permit scheme either through the BASC website (56%) or *Shooting and Conservation* magazine (47%) and respondents consistently reported that they would like to see more clubs in the scheme.

Wildfowling is arguably the wildest and definitely the oldest shooting sport in the British Isles. It is also one of the most conservation-focused shooting disciplines. Wildfowlers are renowned for being the custodians of the estuaries and have operated sustainably for generations. One needs only look at the roster of famous wildfowlers, both past and present, and their wealth of conservation credentials, to be convinced of this simple but profound truth.

BASC's roots are firmly embedded in wildfowling and from those roots, first laid down by Stanley Duncan in the legendary Black Hut in 1908, we have grown into WAGBI and eventually the association we are today.

Wildfowling is a Marmite sport. You'll either love it or hate it, but it is something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. The beautiful sunrises, sunsets, and the myriad wildfowl make up for the small bag sizes. From field to fork, the fruits of your labour provide healthy, sustainable, and locally sourced food which will be enjoyed by your family and friends.

The scheme demonstrates the commitment and passion wildfowlers have for their sport, and we are very grateful to all involved.

Additional relevant information can be found on the wildfowling section of the BASC website. Alternatively, please contact BASC head office or your regional centre – details at the end of this publication.



James Green, BASC head of wildfowl and wetlands

BASC, Marford Mill, Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0HL

Tel: 01244 573 000

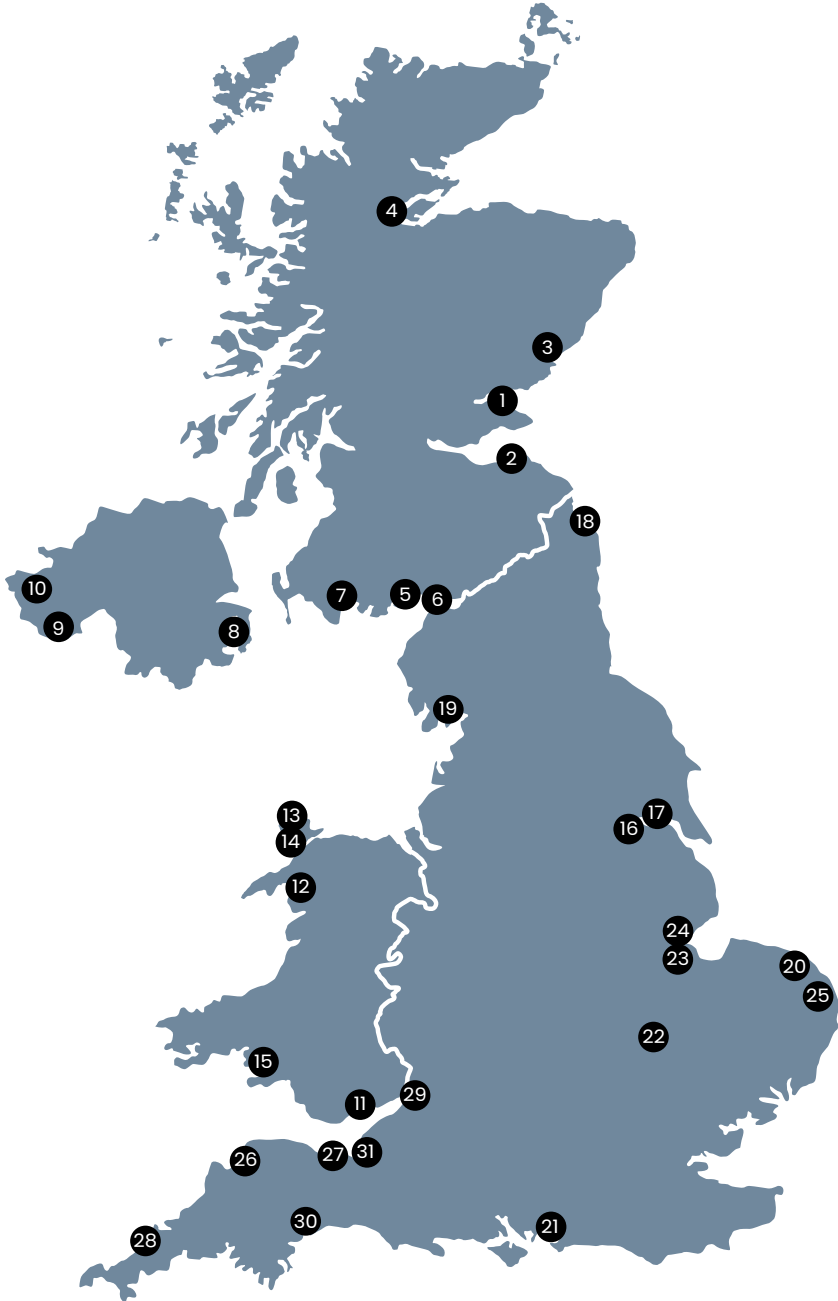
Email: wildfowling@basc.org.uk

Website: basc.org.uk



1. Wildfowling clubs and reserves 2024/2025

1.1 Clubs/reserves locations



1.2 Clubs/reserves

1.3 SCOTLAND

1. Eden Estuary Local Nature Reserve
2. East Lothian
3. Montrose Basin – LNR
4. Black Isle and Mid Ross Wildfowlers Club
5. Caerlaverock NNR
6. Scottish Solway Wildfowlers Association
7. Wigtown Bay LNR

1.4 NORTHERN IRELAND

8. Strangford Lough
9. Derrylin Gun Club
10. Lough Erne Wildfowlers Council

1.5 WALES

11. Wentloog Wildfowling and Conservation Association
12. Traeth Bach Wildfowlers Association
13. Isle of Anglesey Wildfowlers
14. Cefni Estuary – Newborough Warren and Ynys Llanddwyn NNR
15. Morlais Valley Shooting Club

1.6 NORTHERN ENGLAND

16. Barton on Humber Wildfowlers
17. Upper Humber Wildfowling Committee
18. Lindisfarne – Holy Island NNR
19. Furness Wildfowlers Association

1.7 EAST AND SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

20. Norwich and District Wildfowlers Association
21. Langstone and District Wildfowlers and Conservation Association
22. Ely and District Wildfowlers Association
23. Spalding and District Wildfowling Association Ltd and Holbeach Wildfowlers Association
24. South Lincolnshire Wildfowlers Club
25. Rockland Wildfowlers Association

1.8 SOUTH and SOUTH WEST ENGLAND

26. Taw and Torridge Wildfowling Club
27. Bridgwater Bay NNR – Excepted Area
28. Cornwall Wildfowlers Association
29. Gloucestershire Wildfowling and Conservation Association
30. Devon Wildfowling and Conservation Association
31. The Highbridge and Huntspill Wildfowling Association

1.3 Scotland

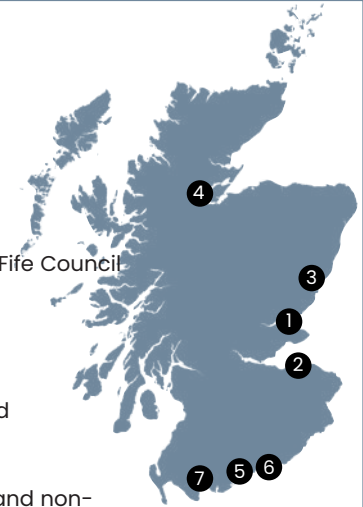
1. Eden Estuary Local Nature Reserve

Contact: Eden Estuary Permit, 5th Floor West,
Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5LT
Email: eden.estuary@fife.gov.uk
Website: Eden Estuary Wildfowling Permit | Fife Council

Permits available: Applications for seasonal permits (Monday to Saturday) available.

Application details: BASC membership number should also be included in applications.

Additional information: There is no Sunday shooting and non-lead shot must be used. Permits should be returned within 21 days of the end of the season whether or not they have been used. Failure to return the permit will result in a one-year ban. As well as conditions detailed on the permit, its use is controlled by a set of byelaws, a copy of which is supplied. Send wildfowling returns to Eden Estuary Permits, 5th Floor West, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT



2. East Lothian

John Muir Country Park – East Lothian (Tynninghame Bay)

Contact: Tel. 01620 827 421
Email: wildfowling@eastlothian.gov.uk
Website: eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210569/countryside_and_wildlife/12429/wildfowling

Permits available: Seasonal permits are available; however, numbers limited to 100 for those living out of the area. Applicants must supply BASC membership number. Wildfowling returns to be sent to East Lothian Council, Landscape and Countryside, Block C, Brewery Park, Haddington EH41 3HA.

3. Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve

Permit application is now only available online at the Angusalive website.

Contact: angusalive.scot/countryside-adventure/wildfowling/

Permits available: Daily visitor permits available for £24.58 per day.

Application details: Applications for permits available from the Angusalive website, details above. Permits processed on a first come, first served basis. No permits to visitors on Saturday. Applications should include BASC membership number and shotgun certificate number. Non-BASC members may apply provided they have acceptable insurance cover.

Additional information: Shooting over defined area of Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve. Shooting times restricted to one and half hours before and after sunrise and one hour before and two hours after sunset each day. No daytime tide-fighting or moon-fighting. Visitor permits valid Monday to Friday only. No Sunday shooting. Permits must be returned within 21 days to Angusalive. Failure to return permit will result in a one-year ban.

4. Black Isle and Mid Ross Wildfowlers Club

Munlochy Bay

Contact: Permit Officer, Will Cameron - Tel. 07780 006 338
Email: willcameron050@gmail.com

Permits available: Permits – £10 per day; Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays only.

Application details: Up to four visitors' permits per shooting day (Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays only). Applicants should telephone or email Will Cameron (above) first for available dates. At this point, a booking can be pencilled in for you. You must then send a note of the address and telephone number of the place at which you will be staying (required in case of emergency). You are also required to provide your latest BASC membership card (which can be photographed or scanned and sent by email), the permit fee, and an SAE for return of permits. Cheques should be made payable to Black Isle and Mid Ross Wildfowlers Club. A code of conduct booklet will be issued together with the permit.

Additional information: Permits should be returned to Will Cameron (please call to obtain postal address) within 15 days of the date for which the permit was issued.

5. Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve

Contact: The issuing officer – Tel. 01738 458 678
NatureScot, Greystone Park, 55/57 Moffat Road, Dumfries DG1 1NP
Email: southern_scotland_admin@nature.scot
Website: nnr-scotland.org.uk/caerlaverock

Permits available: Single day or week. Shooting season commences from 1 October. No fee but permit holders must return permit on expiry whether or not it has been used and include all bag details and details of attendance on days for which it is issued. Maximum block which can be booked is two weeks at any one time.

Application details: Application forms are available from the permit issuing officer (as above), by emailing southern_scotland_admin@nature.scot or by downloading a form from the NatureScot website (above). The form must be returned by email.

Additional information: Applications should be made at least one week before permit is required and must include shotgun certificate number, name of issuing constabulary and BASC membership number. Only non-lead shot may be used for all bores of gun. No Sunday shooting.

6. Scottish Solway Wildfowling Association

Inner Solway

Contact: Robert Teasdale – Tel. 07513 192 667
Autumn Cottage, Kelton, Dumfries DG1 4UA
Website: scottishsolwaywildfowlingassociation.co.uk/membership

Permits available: £8 per day. No Sunday shooting.

Application details: Forms can be downloaded from scottishsolwaywildfowlingassociation.co.uk/membership and submitted with a copy of the SGC, SAE, the permit fee and proof of BASC membership no later than 14 days before permit dates sought.

Additional information: This long-standing permit scheme was in place well before *The Scottish Outdoor Access Code* came into effect in 2005. While the access provisions affect aspects of this permit scheme, they do not affect parking facilities, etc. We recommend that those wishing to shoot the Inner Solway do so under this permit scheme to ensure contact with the local club.

7. Wigtown Bay Local Nature Reserve

Contact: Permits, c/o Machars Action, 26 South Main Street, Wigtown DG8 9EH
Telephone: 01988 403 450
Email: info@macharsaction.com
Website: macharsaction.com/services/wildfowling-permits

Permits available: Weekly permits covering Monday to Friday. There is a maximum of four weeks per visitor and no more than two weeks at any one time. Seasonal permits are also available if you live in the DG8/DG9 areas or are a member of one of the two local wildfowling clubs. Permits cost £25 per week, £15 for seasonal permits (local residents and club members). For any permit enquiries, please contact Machars Action via telephone on 01988 403 450 or email info@macharsaction.co.uk

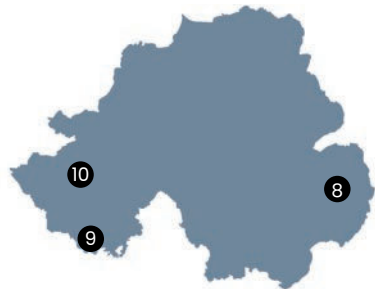
Application details: Applications are administered by Machars Action and must be made at least seven days in advance of permit use. Applicants under 17 years must be accompanied by a permit holder over 21 years of age. Insurance cover of £5 million is required. Applicants must provide details of their BASC membership.

Additional information: Permits can be downloaded from macharsaction.com/services/wildfowling-permits. Alternatively forms can be obtained from Machars Action via the above address. Please enclose an SAE. Permits are issued on a first come, first served basis. Non-lead shot must be used when wildfowling on the foreshore in Scotland. No Sunday shooting. Permit applications and bag returns should be sent to Permits, c/o Machars Action, 26 South Main Street, Wigtown DG8 9EH. Completed bag returns must be submitted within 15 days of the permit's expiry date.

1.4 Northern Ireland

8. Strangford Lough

Contact: Lead ranger Hugh Thurgate
Tel. (028) 4278 7769 or 07900 678 411
National Trust Wildlife Scheme,
Old School House, Portaferry Road,
Newtownards BT22 2AJ
Email: hugh.thurgate@nationaltrust.org.uk



Permits available: The scheme is run in partnership with four local wildfowling clubs. Clubs issue annual permits to club members. National Trust Wildlife Scheme issues private permits to individual BASC members who are not wildfowling club members. Permits are available from July. Please contact the above for full details.

9. Derrylin Gun Club

Contact: Thomas McGoldrick – Tel. 07771 741 942
Email: thomas.mcgoldrick@hotmail.co.uk

Permits available: Season permit – £25; weekly permits – £15; single day permits are also available. The permit scheme is granted on behalf of the Lough Erne Wildfowlers' Council (LEWC) and is not transferable.

Additional information: A copy of BASC membership card must be supplied upon application. Cheques to be made payable to Derrylin Gun Club. The permit is issued subject to the ordinary laws relating to wild bird protection, close seasons, etc. Areas over which no shooting is allowed are shown on maps which are available for examination from the club secretary.

10. Lough Erne Wildfowlers Council

Contact: Thomas McGoldrick – Tel. 07771 741 942
Email: thomas.mcgoldrick@hotmail.co.uk
Peter Taylor
Email: petertaylor81@live.co.uk

Permits available: Season permit – £30; weekly permits – £20. The permit scheme is granted on behalf of the Lough Erne Wildfowlers' Council (LEWC) and is not transferable.

Additional information: A copy of BASC membership card must be supplied upon application. Cheques to be made payable to LEWC. The permit is issued subject to the ordinary laws relating to wild bird protection, close seasons, etc. Areas over which no shooting is allowed are shown on maps which are available for examination from the club secretary.

1.5 Wales

11. Wentloog Wildfowling and Conservation Association

Severn Estuary – South Wales

Contact: Mat Holloway – Tel. 07740 869 620
Email: holloway.mat@gmail.com
Website: wentloogwildfowlers.co.uk

Permits available: Two-flight permit – £25. Permit holders will be accompanied by a full club member. Permits are available for weekdays only. Payments accepted by cheque or bank transfer.



12. Traeth Bach Wildfowlers Association

Morfa Harlech National Nature Reserve Crown Foreshore and Artro Estuary Crown Foreshore

Contact: Derek Jones – Tel. 01766 770 113

Permits available: Day permits (only two permits per week per person) – £15 per day, available Monday to Friday. Saturday shooting is available, but only accompanied by a club member.

Application details: Applications can be submitted by post or made by telephone. Please call Derek Jones to obtain address. Applicants should supply their BASC membership number and vehicle make and registration number. Payments to be made by cheque to Traeth Bach Wildfowlers Association. When applying by post, please enclose an SAE.

13. Isle of Anglesey Wildfowlers

Coastal wildfowling available on the Alaw estuary, Four Mile Bridge, Cumoron estuary, Dulas Bay estuary

Contact: Clifford Spencely – Tel. 01514 282 469
Hugh Spencely – Tel. 07713 477 312

Permits available: £25 per flight.

Application details: All applicants to supply proof of insurance.

Additional information: Day permit and shotgun certificate must be produced on demand. Shotguns exceeding 8 bore are not allowed. A guide is available upon request. Bed and breakfast at £15 per night is also available if required. Wildfowl returns to be sent to Derek Jones by arrangement.

14. Cefni Estuary – Newborough Warren and Ynys Llanddwyn National Nature Reserve

Contact: Officer Graham Williams – Tel. 03000 655 251

Permits available: Day permits – £10 per day (only two permits per week per person). Seasonal permits free of charge to those on the Ynys Mon/Anglesey electoral role. No shooting on Sundays.

Application details: For application forms send an SAE to NRW regional office. Applications should be made at least one month in advance and include details of vehicle, and BASC membership card (valid for the whole shooting season) and a copy of a valid shotgun certificate required. Please contact Graham Williams (as above) for the address. Non-BASC members are required to hold appropriate third party liability insurance. Payments to be made by cheque payable to NRW.

Additional information: Non-lead shot only. Shooting is only allowed within areas shown on the permit card. Wildfowling returns to be sent to Graham Williams as above within 15 days of end of season.

15. Morlais Valley Shooting Club

Burry Inlet – West Glamorgan

Contact: Paul Leyshon – Tel. 01792 850 122

Permits available: A maximum of 50 permits issued each season at £60 each. Junior permits are free. The sponsor of the junior permit must be an existing permit holder. Prospective permit holders must attend an interview with club officials. Cheques should be made payable to the Morlais Valley Shooting Club.

Application details: Applications should be made to Paul Leyshon (as above) by telephone. Valid BASC membership number is required. Wildfowl returns are to be sent to Paul Leyshon by arrangement.

Additional information: A dog capable of retrieving from water must accompany permit holders at all times.

1.6 Northern England

16. Barton on Humber Wildfowlers

South Humber/North Lincolnshire

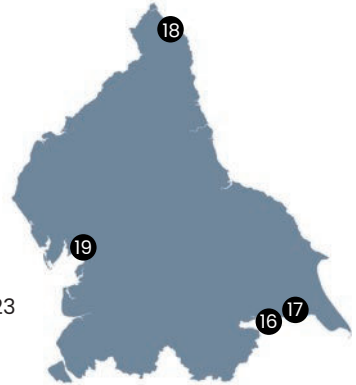
Contact: Brett Bartram – Tel. 07834 559 265
Email: bartonwildfowlers@outlook.com

Permits available: Permits are available for the 2022/23 season. £25 per flight (am or pm, the choice is yours).

Application details: Applications to be made to Brett Bartram, the club secretary, by text or email. Payment by cheque payable to Barton Wildfowlers Club or cash. Payment can be made on the day with the guide who will meet you.

Additional information: Precise shooting arrangements, including time/area to be visited, will be made with the club at the time of application. Wildfowling returns to be logged with the club guide.

The club now has vacancies for new members.



17. Upper Humber Wildfowling Committee

The River Humber – Winteringham

Contact: Alan Otway
Email: otway987@btinternet.com

Permits available: Single day permits – £30 (Monday – Friday). No permits issued in September or between 24 December and 2 January.

Application details: Must include photocopy of BASC membership card. Payments by cheque made payable to Upper Humber Wildfowling Committee.

Additional information: Wildfowlers must be accompanied by a UHWC South Shore permit holder and club member, and should have a dog.

18. Lindisfarne – Holy Island National Nature Reserve

Contact: Email: wildfowling@basc.org.uk
Website: basc.org.uk/lindisfarne

Permits available: A maximum of 200 season permits are issued each season. Prices of permits start from £67 – subject to terms and conditions. Introductory permits are available for novice wildfowlers offering a chance to try wildfowling with an experienced guide. BASC Wildlife Fund stamp included. Note that anyone who has held a permit at Lindisfarne previously cannot apply for an introductory permit.

Application details: Permit application forms available from basc.org.uk/lindisfarne. For permit information, please contact BASC wildfowl and wetlands department: wildfowling@basc.org.uk. Seasonal permit applications will be accepted from 1 August; download application forms from the wildfowling section of the BASC website and follow the instructions on the form.

19. Furness Wildfowlers Association

Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary

Contact: Baz McLaughlan
Email: bazmcj@gmail.com

Permits available: Single day permits available at £20 per day from 1 October to 20 February.

Application details: Please contact Baz by email for more information. Please note, you must be a BASC member.

Additional information: All outings will be guided by a club member. The club has access to many miles of coastal and inland shooting.

1.7 East and South East England

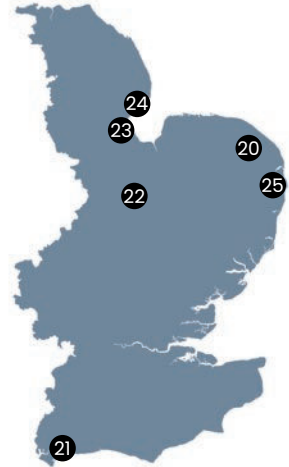
20. Norwich and District Wildfowlers Association

Contact: Chris Sandell – Tel. 01603 749 852
Website: norwichanddistrictwildfowlers.co.uk

Permits available: £25 daily, except Sundays. No visitors' permits issued for September.

Application details: Available on request on the above telephone number. Applicants should supply fee, SAE, and BASC membership number. Cheques should be made payable to NDWA Ltd. Applications should be made one month in advance.

Additional information: Visiting guests must be accompanied by a member of the club. Wildfowling returns should be sent to the above contact by prior arrangement. The club may have vacancies for new members.



21. Langstone and District Wildfowlers and Conservation Association

Contact: Email: enquiry@ladwaca.com
Website: ladwaca.com

Permits available: Single day – £25 per day. A limited number of temporary day permits are available for accompanied wildfowling opportunities by arrangement with the LADWACA management committee. The scheme is primarily a taster for prospective new members.

Application details: Cheques should be made payable to LADWACA. Applications to be made on the above email or the website. Proof of valid BASC membership required.

Additional information: The club has vacancies for new members. Wildfowling returns to be sent to the above email. If you decide to join the club then £10 of your permit fee can be used as your non-refundable application fee. Details of full membership can be found on the website above.

22. Ely and District Wildfowlers' Association

Ouse Washes

Contact: Dave Fox – Tel. 07772 385 712
Email: EDWA.wash.warden@outlook.com
Website: elywildfowlers.co.uk

Permits available: Inland wildfowling on the Ouse Washes. Permits available at £25 per flight. Sundays excluded.

Application details: All guests to be accompanied by a full EDWA member. Permits subject to guide availability. Copy of BASC membership card to be provided by the guest. Contact Dave Fox by email or phone.

Additional information: Club has vacancies for full members. Permit cost will be reimbursed if full membership taken out within 12 months.

23. Spalding and District Wildfowling Association Ltd and Holbeach Wildfowlers Association.

The Wash – Holbeach Marsh

Contact: Holbeach Wildfowlers – D Williamson
Willow Tree Farm, Birds Drove, Surfleet, Spalding PE11 4BE
Website: holbeachwildfowlers.co.uk

Spalding and District Wildfowlers Association Ltd – T Gray
Email: tonygray26@hotmail.co.uk
Tel. 07714 260 264
Website: spaldingwildfowlers.co.uk

Permits available: Single day permits – £15 per day (midnight to midnight) or £90 per week (Monday to Sunday). No permits for 1 September, 25 or 26 December.

Application details: Application for a permit should be downloaded from the website above and posted to the applicable permit officer. Applications must be made at least seven days in advance. An SAE and a copy of BASC membership card must be included. Please make cheques payable to Holbeach Wildfowlers Association or Spalding and District Wildfowlers Association.

Additional information: Failure to comply with any of the rules printed on the permit, or any breach of shooting discipline, will result in the withdrawal of the permit and permanent refusal of any future permits. Bag returns are required and should be sent to the permit officer as above. Permit holders must be accompanied by a member of one of the clubs while on the marsh.

24. South Lincolnshire Wildfowlers Club

Frampton and Kirton Marshes and various marshes around The Wash

Contact: Steve Cook – Tel. 07795 434 258
Website: slwc.co.uk

Permits available: Single day permits – £20, weekly permits – £60. Wildfowling on various marshes around The Wash. Various options are available based on location.

Application details: Applications for permits are done by telephone. Payments by cheque payable to South Lincolnshire Wildfowlers Club. Photocopy of BASC membership card is required.

Additional information: All permits are issued at the discretion of the officer. Bag returns must be completed and returned within 14 days of the visit, even if no birds were shot. Shotgun certificate, BASC membership card and permits must be carried at all times on all marshes during the visits. The permit holder is obliged to show these documents to another member of the club, police or landowner if requested to do so. The club has member vacancies – see the above website for details.

25. Rockland Wildfowlers Association

Rockland Broad – Rockland St Mary, Norfolk

Contact: Boating officer
Email: boats@rocklandwa.co.uk
Website: rocklandwa.co.uk

Permits available: Day permits to shoot wildfowl from a boat holding a maximum of two people, who must be BASC members. Fridays and Saturdays only. Cost of the permit is £60 per boat per day, which covers both morning and evening flights (four hours each).

Application details: Ability to row essential and a dog recommended. Hides, nets and decoys required. Most quarry species available throughout the season.

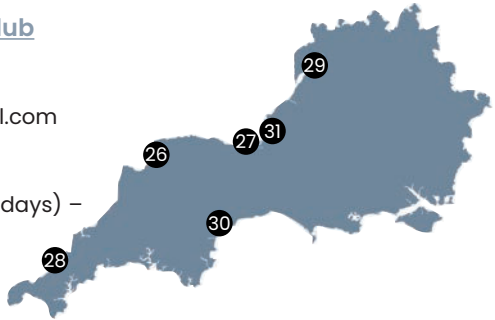
Additional information: Applicants must supply a photocopy of their BASC membership card. Wildfowl returns required – available to print on club website. Place in the box in the boatshed. The club has member vacancies.

1.8 South and South West England

26. Taw and Torridge Wildfowling Club

Contact: Chris Salisbury
Email: chrissalisbury61@gmail.com
Website: ttwc.org.uk

Permits available: Daily permits (no Sundays) – £10. Please contact Chris Salisbury for permit availability. Available only by prior arrangement with accompanying TTWC member.



Application details: BASC members only; valid membership number must be supplied. All guests must be accompanied by a full TTWC member. We will endeavour to cater for all requests. Applications for permits by email only. Cheques to be made payable to TTWC.

Additional information: The scheme is an ideal taster for prospective members. Wildfowling returns will be completed by the guide.

27. Bridgwater Bay NNR – Excepted Area

Contact: NE Bridgwater Bay NNR senior reserves manager – Tel. 01458 860 120
Email: wessexareateam@naturalengland.org.uk
Natural England, The Avalon Marshes Centre, Westhay, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9TT

BASC wildfowl and wetlands department
Email: wildfowling@basc.org.uk

Permits available: This excepted area is unique in England. No permits are required. Authorisation, pre-booking or bag returns are not required. The ‘excepted area’ comprises the foreshore at the western end of Bridgwater Bay NNR, open to the general public for wildfowling and shore angling sited between Shurton Bars OS:1799045295 (western boundary) around Hinkley Point to Stolford OS:2406845449 (eastern boundary). Non-lead shot only and there is no shooting in Somerset on Sundays.

Additional information: The armed Civil Nuclear Constabulary police the power station area at Hinkley. Guns must be unloaded and carried in their slips when outside the excepted area of the foreshore. It is advisable to carry your certificate or proof of identity and insurance is recommended (e.g. BASC membership).

CAUTION: The estuary has the world's second highest tidal range. The foreshore is a mixture of treacherous intertidal silt, mud, sand, rocky reefs, and the cliffs are unstable. Tide tables should always be consulted, and a preliminary daylight visit is advisable. The NNR area was used for ordnance testing and there is a live target area off Lilstock. If unexploded shells are found they should not be touched, and the site manager and/or the police should be notified immediately. The Eastern end foreshore is accessible via Eastern end parking, behind the sea wall at Stolford (grid ref: 233459). Western end foreshore access is limited by dangerous cliffs. Either park at Lilstock and walk along the foreshore to the NNR boundary (OS:1799045295) or drive through Knighton to the end of the drove, park and follow the footpath to the cliff top coastal path, turn right and walk to OS: 1921045877 where the cliffs end.

28. Cornwall Wildfowlers' Association

Camel Estuary

Contact: Paul Wallace – Tel. 07974 285 736
Email: paul.e.wallace@sky.com

Permits available: Season permits only – £65 (shooting on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only). Permit entitles up to ten full shooting days a year. A maximum of 37 season permits are available annually. Make cheques payable to C.W.A.

29. Gloucestershire Wildfowling and Conservation Association

River Severn

Contact: Ian Whitehall – Tel. 01249 721 562. Mobile: 07719 785 146
Website: gwca.club

Permits available: Accompanied daily permits – £25. Applications by telephone to Mr Whitehall as above. BASC membership number required. Payments by cheque to be made payable to Gloucestershire Wildfowling and Conservation Association.

Additional information: Gloucestershire Wildfowling and Conservation Association requires all shooting members to complete a wildfowl ID course and test. For this reason, all guests need to be accompanied by a current GWCA full member. They will endeavour to accommodate all requests.

30. Devon Wildfowling and Conservation Association

Exe Estuary and Teign Estuary

Contact: Jerry Hiscutt (club president/initial contact) – 07443 117 277
Email: devonwildfowlers1953@gmail.com

Permits available: Guided morning or afternoon flights – £15 per flight for first timers; £25 thereafter. Daily tickets available (except Sundays) by contacting Jerry Hiscutt.

Application details: BASC members only. Proof of valid BASC membership required. Make cheques payable to DWCA.

Additional information: Wildfowling returns will be completed by the guide.

31. The Highbridge and Huntspill Wildfowling Association

River Parrett in Somerset

Contact: Robin Trusler
Email: robintrusler47@hotmail.com

Permits available: Permits available for accompanied flights only. Monday to Saturday from 1 November. Daily permits – £30 per day, morning or evening flight – £15 per flight.

Application details: Application required seven days prior to visit, subject to criteria being met. Valid BASC membership number must be provided. Make cheques payable to HHWA.

Additional information: The scheme is open to BASC members only. Guests must be accompanied by a HHWA member. Returns will be submitted by host member.



Image: ARC Photography

2. Wildfowling and the law

2.1 Shooting on the foreshore - England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The liability of a person to prosecution for armed trespass on the foreshore under the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended) and the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004, depends on whether that person has lawful authority or reasonable excuse to be there while in possession of a firearm. This depends, in turn, on who owns the foreshore and whether the owner has authorised, either expressly or by implication, that person to shoot there.

The foreshore of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is presumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to be vested in His Majesty by right of his Crown so as to form part of the Crown Estate. Over the years, parts of the Crown Estate foreshore have been sold off to, for example, local authorities, private individuals, companies, the National Trust, etc. In addition, local authorities now control other parts or other organisations under a regulating lease from the Crown Estate Commissioners and such a lease may or may not include the sporting rights.

With regard to the definition of a public place, Section 57 (4) of the Firearms Act 1968 defines it as being any highway or any other premises or place to which, at the material time, the public have or are permitted to have access whether on payment or otherwise. The Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 does not define “public place”, however, the Guidance on Northern Ireland Firearms Controls (Article 61 para 3) states that “public place” has its normal meaning of any premises or place to which, at the material time, the public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise. The foreshore, which in our view is a public place for the purposes of the act, is defined as that part of the seashore which is more often than not covered by the flux and reflux of the four ordinary tides occurring midway between spring and neap.

2.2 Crown Estate foreshore - England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The authority granted to members of BASC by the Crown Estate Commissioners, which entitled members of the association to be on Crown Estate foreshore with a firearm for the purposes of wildfowling (The General Agreement) formally ended in 1999.

Wildfowling on Crown Estate foreshore now takes place through leases of sporting rights granted to wildfowling clubs, other conservation bodies (e.g. RSPB) and statutory bodies (e.g. borough councils). To carry out wildfowling on Crown Estate foreshore you must therefore be either a member of a club holding a lease, a guest of such a club, or have applied through a permit scheme operated by a club. There are also opportunities to shoot by permit on some areas of Crown Estate foreshore leased by statutory and non-statutory bodies.

2.3 Shooting on the foreshore – Scotland

Foreshore in Scotland is defined as an area of ground between the high and low water marks of ordinary spring tides. In Scotland, the right to recreation on the foreshore is a right held by the Crown for all to enjoy. Shooting is deemed to be a recreation and therefore wildfowling can take place on all foreshore except areas where this right has been modified – such as harbours, MoD ground, certain Local Nature Reserves and National Nature Reserves and on Orkney and Shetland. Please check with BASC Scotland for information on local restrictions or permit schemes that may operate on areas where the right of recreation has been modified.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the accompanying Scottish Outdoor Access Code have introduced a number of changes with respect to access to wildfowling in Scotland. Section 2.12 of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code excludes those carrying a firearm (such as a shotgun) from the general provisions of the access legislation “except where the person is crossing land or water to immediately access land or water, or return from such, where shooting rights are granted, held or held in trust or by any person authorised to exercise such rights”. What this means is that wildfowling no longer have to access the foreshore by public rights of way. Even when carrying their shotgun they can cross land or water as long as it is to immediately access or return from the foreshore, and as long as they are behaving in a responsible manner. For further details on access legislation, please contact BASC Scotland.

2.4 Chapters of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 as amended 2011 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

A. Open/shooting seasons for wildfowl (ducks and geese) and other species according to the above acts (all dates are inclusive)

Wildfowl in Northern Ireland anywhere	1 September	-	31 January
Wildfowl in England, Wales and Scotland in or over any area below the high water mark of ordinary spring tides	1 September	-	20 February
Wildfowl in England, Wales and Scotland elsewhere	1 September	-	31 January
Coot (England, Wales and Scotland only)	1 September	-	31 January
Moorhen (England, Wales and Scotland only)	1 September	-	31 January
Common snipe (England, Wales and Scotland)	12 August	-	31 January

Jack snipe (Northern Ireland only)	1 September – 31 January
Woodcock (England, Wales and NI)	1 October – 31 January
Woodcock (Scotland)	1 September – 31 January
Golden plover	1 September – 31 January

B. Shooting on Sundays and at night

Northern Ireland: All wild birds are protected on Sundays, Christmas Day or during the period commencing one hour after sunset on any day and ending one hour before sunrise the next day.

Scotland: Wildfowl and waders may not be shot on Sundays or on Christmas Day.

England and Wales: Before the passing of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, orders prohibiting the shooting of wildfowl on Sundays were made under the Protection of Birds Act 1954. These orders have not been rescinded and so the following counties/part counties are still affected: Anglesey, Brecknock, Caernarfon, Carmarthen, Cardigan, Cornwall, Denbigh, Devon, Doncaster, Glamorgan, Great Yarmouth County Borough, Isle of Ely, Leeds County Borough, Merioneth, Norfolk, Pembroke, Somerset, North and West Ridings of Yorkshire.

C. The species of birds which can be legally killed or taken by permitted means outside the close seasons under The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended 2011) Schedule 2, part I and Game Preservation Act (Northern Ireland) 1928 (as amended 2011) Article 7 – (1) (bb) and Article 7 – (1) (c) are listed below.

DUCK

Gadwall
Goldeneye
Mallard*
Pintail**
Pochard**

¹Scaup

Shoveler
Teal
Tufted duck
Wigeon

GEESE

Canada goose
Greylag goose
Pink-footed goose
³European white-fronted goose

¹Northern Ireland only.

²England, Wales, and Scotland only

³England and Wales only (Greenland white-fronted geese were removed from the quarry list on 01/04/20).

WADERS

Common snipe
Golden plover
¹Jack snipe
Woodcock**

OTHERS

²Coot
²Moorhen

2.5 Sustainable shooting

To ensure the long-term future of shooting, it is essential that the shooting of wildfowl is sustainable.

Within this context, sustainable shooting respects quarry species and seeks to conserve and improve the environment. It avoids excessive consumption, complies with the law, improves the health and wellbeing of participants, and provides food and economic benefits to the wider community.

BASC's Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice (see BASC website for most up to date version) relates to wildfowl, waders, and rail quarry species – particularly those where the available evidence demonstrates the need for action.

The following golden rules apply:

1. To ensure shooting is sustainable, those who shoot must adhere to the species-specific shooting recommendations.
 - a. No more than six grey geese – to a maximum of five pinkfeet, four greylag, and two European white-fronts per person, per day – unless for conservation, health and safety, or crop protection measures (and supported by a licence agreement or management plan). At all times show restraint. Take what you need, not what you can.
 - b. No more than ten ducks per person, per day. At all times show restraint. Take what you need, not what you can.
2. Eat what you shoot. It is your responsibility to ensure all shot quarry is put to good use.
3. Where not already required by law, consent, or lease, shooters should collect bag data and submit information for all wildfowl species to a national monitoring scheme.
4. Shooters should contribute to habitat creation, management, and restoration initiatives.
5. Shooters should assist with citizen science initiatives including bird counts, ring recovery reporting, wing surveys, disease monitoring, etc.

It is important that those who shoot recognise that unsustainable shooting can affect population size, age composition, sex ratio, behaviour, and distribution of natural populations. Understanding the potential impacts of shooting is a prerequisite to managing quarry species in a sustainable manner.

The 'broad sustainability principles' apply to all species (see left), with the following variations.

- a. The Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice does not apply to reared and released mallard, and the shooting thereof.
- b. Bespoke actions are required for some species: see Code of Practice for species-specific recommendations.

- c. The Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice does not apply to the use of large bore historic firearms used to maintain historic, cultural, and traditional aspects of wildfowling.
- d. The Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice does not override any site-based requirements; all shooters need to abide by landowner, club, or consent restrictions.

For more information on sustainable shooting and the species-specific recommendations, please visit the BASC website – www.basc.org.uk/wildfowling/advice/sustainable-shooting-code-of-practice

2.6 Wildfowl shooting and severe weather

In periods of severe winter weather, (usually when freezing weather conditions are persistent) the relevant government ministers have the power to make a protection order suspending the shooting of wildfowl and waders under Section 2 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Similar arrangements apply in Northern Ireland.

When is a suspension enforced?

The shooting of wildfowl and waders is normally suspended after 14 consecutive days of severe weather. The criteria for triggering severe weather procedures are based on the extent and severity of freezing habitat conditions collected daily by some 24 coastal weather stations around Britain. The procedure leading up to a wildfowling suspension is as follows.

When more than half of the weather stations have recorded seven consecutive days of frozen or snow-covered ground in Scotland or England/Wales or both, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee informs BASC accordingly.

If the severe weather looks set to continue, BASC informs its members, that if the weather conditions continue for a further six days and look likely to continue, then a protection order suspending the shooting of wildfowl and waders in the appropriate country is likely to be signed on the 13th day, and will take effect at lam on the 15th day.

Throughout this period, information on local weather conditions and wildfowl numbers and behaviour is closely monitored all around the country, through BASC regional centres.

Voluntary restraint

Restraint should be part of normal wildfowling but prior to the above procedures being brought into action, BASC typically calls for extra restraint, where it is needed, from day seven of severe weather, up to the time when any statutory suspension is imposed. Such restraint is an integral part of the arrangements for wildfowl shooting during periods of prolonged severe weather. There are guidelines available from

BASC, but there are no set rules, as conditions and requirements vary around the country. Wildfowling is best placed to consider all the facts relevant to their particular locality and to decide the most appropriate action. It is voluntary restraint that is urged by BASC, not a suspension, although if necessary a self-imposed suspension may be the best course of action.

In recent years organisations such as RSPB, WWT and BTO, and statutory conservation agencies, have supported BASC calls for extra restraint in shooting by calling on their own memberships and the wider public to minimise disturbance to birds in wetland areas. This is a welcome development, as wildfowl at such times benefit from reduced disturbance from all recreational users of their habitats.

NB: The amount of snow cover is not measured in the formal weather monitoring process. In Scotland this is taken into account in its decision-making, not least in light of the need for inland feeding for geese. Elsewhere in the UK it is at the voluntary restraint stage that such covering of feeding grounds should also be considered when decisions about shooting are taken at the local level.

Who decides that there should be a suspension of shooting?

The criteria for deciding when there should be a temporary suspension of wildfowl shooting have been decided jointly by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, BASC, RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, British Trust for Ornithology, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and others. They have been adopted by the Scottish, Welsh and NI Governments for use as appropriate in their countries. These bodies are closely involved in any implementation of the procedures and BASC, as the representative body for shooting, is formally consulted before a protection order is signed.

Does a suspension affect the whole country?

This depends on the extent of the severe weather. A suspension can be instituted throughout Great Britain, in Scotland alone or in England and Wales. Northern Ireland has its own, similar, arrangements. If you are in any doubt, contact your country or regional BASC office, or check BASC's website.

What if the weather changes before the suspension of shooting?

Shorter periods of thaw, i.e. only one or two days, are neutral in that they neither count towards, nor terminate the severe weather process. A thaw of three days (when half or fewer of the meteorological stations have recorded frozen ground) resets the counter to zero on the third day of thaw.

Even if the weather changes for the better before day 13, a statutory suspension is still likely to follow (to allow birds to recover any lost condition or return to their normal habitats), although it may not last so long (see below).

How long will a suspension last?

A statutory suspension of wildfowling normally lasts for a maximum of 14 days, although it is reviewed after seven days. The suspension may be lifted before the end of 14 days if the weather conditions have improved and the forecast is for continuation of this improvement, although this will take into account the need for a recovery period for wildfowl after the severe weather. Any such lifting is agreed by all the appropriate organisations.

If the suspension is lifted early, BASC and the appropriate government departments undertake a publicity campaign to inform wildfowl shooters and other wetland users of the fact. If the severe weather continues beyond the first 14 days, and looks likely to continue, a second protection order may be signed, suspending wildfowl shooting for up to a further 14 days.

How will I know if there is a suspension?

When a protection order is signed, BASC uses all its means of communication to inform its members and the shooting community, including the BASC website (basc.org.uk), emails to membership groups, telephone messages, and press releases to national and regional newspapers and media, and the sporting press. The appropriate government department and conservation agency also undertake to issue notices to the public through the press and media. The non-governmental bodies, including RSPB and WWT, contribute to the publicity campaign through their own press and other means. If you are in any doubt, you should contact your BASC country or regional office where a 24-hour telephone information service will be available:

BASC head office	01244 573 000	enquiries@basc.org.uk
BASC Scotland	01350 723 226	scotland@basc.org.uk
BASC Wales	01244 573 029	wales@basc.org.uk
BASC Northern Ireland	02892 605 050	nire@basc.org.uk
Northern England	01244 573 040	northern@basc.org.uk
Central England	01283 810 910	central@basc.org.uk
South East England	01244 573 028	southeast@basc.org.uk
South West England	01884 260 910	southwest@basc.org.uk
Eastern	01244 573 032	eastern@basc.org.uk

Local wildfowling clubs and game shooting syndicates will inform their members of details of any voluntary restraints prior to a statutory suspension.

Which species are affected?

When a protection order is in place, it becomes an offence to kill or take any of the following species, whether on the coast or inland:

DUCKS: Mallard (including reared mallard), teal, wigeon, pintail, tufted duck, pochard, shoveler, gadwall, goldeneye and scaup (NI only).

GEESE: Greylag, pink-footed, European white-fronted and Canada.

WADERS: golden plover, woodcock, jack snipe, common snipe, moorhen and coot.

Gamebirds are not affected, but note that reared duck are included.

NB: Shooting of geese for crop protection during any statutory suspension period is also prohibited unless it is otherwise permitted by licence. Any such shooting should be conducted to minimise unnecessary disturbance to other wildfowl.

Following BASC efforts, the press notices and media coverage by Defra, RSPB and others, call on all people, not just wildfowlers, who might otherwise disturb wildfowl during prolonged severe weather (bird watchers, dog walkers, etc.), to avoid doing so.

Northern Ireland

The arrangements for wildfowl shooting during prolonged severe weather in Northern Ireland are broadly similar. For detailed information contact BASC's Northern Ireland office on tel: 02892 605 050 or email: nire@basc.org.uk

What can I do to help?

In addition to acting responsibly during prolonged severe weather, we all can help wildfowl under pressure from the conditions, by informing all shooters, especially during statutory suspensions, of the situation and encouraging other users of wetlands to avoid unnecessary disturbance of the birds until conditions improve.

In conclusion

It is in the shooting community's interest to be seen to respond responsibly during prolonged severe weather, even though wildfowl and waders may not always show signs of suffering from the conditions. We have gained much respect by our actions in the past, and must not jeopardise this by thoughtless or irresponsible behaviour.



3. Non-lead shot information

3.1 Restrictions on lead shot

England and Wales

In England and Wales the lead shot regulations ban the use of lead shot on or over all foreshore, on or over specified SSSIs, and for the shooting of all ducks and geese, coot and moorhen, wherever they occur. Please contact the appropriate BASC regional centre, BASC head office, or refer to the website for further details.

Scotland

Restrictions on the use of lead shot for wildfowling operate differently from England and Wales and, broadly, prohibit the use of lead shot on or over wetlands. This includes all foreshore. There are some exceptions, mainly over peat-based habitats and short-lived wet areas. Please contact the BASC Scotland office for further details. Guidance is also available on the government website at legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2004/358/contents/made

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland regulations follow a similar habitat-based approach by prohibiting the use of lead shot, for any purpose, on or over wetlands. Shooting ducks, geese, game, pests or clays away from wetlands is not affected by the legislation. So, for example, ducks flying over, or geese coming into, a dry stubble field, can still be shot with lead. Guidance is also available on the BASC website.

The Code of Good Shooting Practice

Please note that the Code of Good Shooting Practice, issued jointly by BASC, Countryside Alliance, Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, National Gamekeepers' Organisation and other organisations, calls for non-lead shot to be used during any game or rough shooting which might otherwise deposit spent lead shot into wetland areas used by feeding wildfowl.

3.2 Non-lead substitutes

The range of substitutes continues to grow, as does experience among wildfowlers of their use.

Bismuth

This is generally good ballistically and available in a wide range of loads up to magnum, and is no problem for guns. It is available in fibre and plastic wads, and is available loose from specialist reloading companies.

Steel

This is the cheapest option and is available in a range of loads up to 42g (3½"), plus clay loads. It is available in plastic, fibre and bio wads, as well as loose from specialist reloading companies.

Care is needed when matching steel shot cartridges with guns to ensure compatibility and safety according to International Proof Commission (CIP) regulations. Care is also needed when using high velocity loads, as these may increase risks to guns and could invalidate insurance claims in the event of damage.

Do not use in Damascus barrels or tightly-choked guns. Important information on steel shot use, especially high performance steel, and CIP regulations are available from BASC (Tel: 01244 573 000). Wildfowling steel shot loads typically are high performance and to be fired only through steel shot-proofed guns.

Tungsten-based shot

Impact Tungsten Matrix is available. Loose tungsten based shot types are available for homeloading in a range of types and sizes, some suitable for wildfowling. Reports on performance are good. Plastic wad usually recommended but others are becoming available.

Homeloading/large-bore guns

For homeloading advice, equipment and shot, contact specialist reloading companies.

Finally – BASC urges ALL wildfowl and wetland shooters (both inland and coastal), and all other shooters affected by the regulations affecting use of lead shot, to abide by them and use non-lead cartridges responsibly in the best interests of our quarry and our sport.

If you cannot obtain non-lead cartridges from your usual retailer, try contacting the manufacturers directly. There are several overseas producers who have a range of steel shot cartridges.



Image: Holly Stranks

4. Fieldcraft

4.1 Wildfowling Code of Practice

Wildfowling is the pursuit of wild ducks, geese and waders. It is carried out during the nominated season from 1 September to 31 January inland (above the height of an ordinary spring tide) and from 1 September to 20 February on the foreshore (below the height of an ordinary spring tide).

Wildfowling normally takes place at dawn and dusk but can occur at any time of day or night (apart from Northern Ireland, where night shooting is prohibited). The skill is to make the most of the opportunities presented through an understanding of the quarry's natural movement. Ducks and geese generally move both to and from feeding and roosting grounds at dawn and dusk. They will also move on the tide and at times around a full moon when the moonlight improves visibility and allows extra feeding time.

The aim of this code of practice is to give clear guidelines as to what is acceptable conduct, both for the newcomer to the sport and experienced wildfowlers. It also describes the general areas of the law relating to wildfowling, but it is not a full study of all relevant legislation in this area. It is vital that every wildfowler knows and understands the law relating to the sport. For clarification on specific laws relating to wildfowling, contact BASC head office, country or regional offices.

The wild ducks, geese and waders which are the legal quarry of wildfowlers, are largely migratory and overwinter in the UK, particularly in coastal areas. Through sound conservation we can all work to ensure plentiful quarry species while benefiting the wider environment. As some of the quarry species are in decline throughout their migratory transit route, it is essential to shoot responsibly and carry out conservation work in the form of habitat creation and predator control where possible. This work will also benefit an array of other species. In addition to this, wildfowlers should record their bag and manage shooting levels to ensure the take and level of activity is sustainable. Most clubs require bag returns either as a condition of their lease or consent, or to assess and file for their own future reference.

High standards underpin public and political support for shooting, now and in the future.

This code provides advice at two levels:

- Advice that **must** be followed in order to deliver sustainable shooting. Unless otherwise stated, the term 'must' only applies to meeting the standards set by this code of practice and does not refer to a legal obligation.
- Advice that **should** be followed to achieve best practice – any deviation from which would need justification.

THE FOLLOWING GOLDEN RULES APPLY

1. In order to ensure the future of the sport, wildfowling must abide by the law and meet the standards described in this code, and show respect for the countryside, due regard to health and safety and consideration for others.
2. The use of lead shot for all wildfowling has been made illegal in England and Wales, and for all shooting on or over wetlands (including foreshore) in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
3. BASC strongly recommends the use of a competent gundog when wildfowling.
4. Ensure that you can recognise legal quarry species; if in doubt, don't shoot.
5. Ensure you have permission, either through club membership or landowner authorisation, and adhere to the boundaries set. In Scotland, the right to public recreation exists so wildfowling club membership is not always required. For more information on specific sites, contact the BASC wildfowl and wetlands department or BASC Scotland.

REMEMBER – ignorance of the law is no excuse. If in doubt, always ask.

Behaviour in the field

Planning

- When wildfowling at a site for the first time, either go in daylight or with someone who knows the area to familiarise yourself with the features of the marsh.
- Make sure you know the safe access and exit routes, marsh boundaries and any inherent dangers such as areas of soft mud or sand.
- Make sure you know all the local rules for the management and control of wildfowling. For example, not all clubs allow crow or pigeon shooting on their grounds. Always ask if there are any restrictions in place.
- Always consult relevant tide tables before going onto the marsh, and make any necessary adjustments for location. If British Summer Time is in operation, add one hour to GMT.
- Remember that the height and timing of tides is affected by the prevailing weather conditions, both locally out to sea and further upriver. In certain conditions this can mean that the tide can be several feet higher and appear hours earlier than predicted.
- Always tell someone when and where you are going wildfowling, and do not forget to tell them that you have returned safely.

Above all, be safe and be sensible.

Useful equipment

- Always carry a waterproof wristwatch; it is essential for timing the predicted state of the tide. Don't always rely on your mobile phone which can easily get wet and become useless.
- A wading stick is vital for walking on the marsh. It is used to test soft mud or quicksand, or the water depth of creeks, gutters and crossing places.

- If you are out all day, carry some food and a thermos containing a hot drink.
- Wear comfortable, inconspicuous, warm and waterproof clothing.
- Thigh or chest waders are normally recommended.
- A large bag or rucksack is useful to carry equipment and to sit on.
- It is good practice to have an up-to-date copy of your shotgun certificate with you, along with any local permits and your club membership card.
- Binoculars will enhance the day and are useful for bird identification as well as marking shot quarry.
- Don't forget to take supplies for your dog, especially if you are out for extended periods of time. Neoprene coats are useful for both keeping your dog warm and helping it dry out after swimming, as well as assisting with camouflage.

Safety equipment

- In an emergency, a mobile phone will enable you to summon assistance by dialling 999/112, or 101 in Scotland, and asking for the coastguard. Ensure that the battery is fully charged and the phone is stored in a waterproof case before taking it on to the marsh. And remember many rural locations have poor or no mobile reception.
- The what3words mobile app can help the emergency services pinpoint your location should you need emergency assistance.
- A compass or a pocket GPS receiver are essential pieces of kit. They could, for example be the only reliable way of making it off the marsh in fog. See 4.2 Using a compass on the marsh (page 40).
- Flashing a torch nine times – three short flashes, then three long flashes, then three more short flashes – is the SOS morse code signal. Distress flares might also be used for attracting attention.
- Always carry a jointed cleaning rod, hide pole or slim bamboo cane as it is all too easy to get mud or snow in the muzzle of your gun. Never fire a shot to try and clear an obstruction in the barrels.

On the marsh

- Do not disturb residents near access points by making a noise or banging car doors when arriving early in the morning or leaving late at night.
- Never arrive on the marsh late or depart early and so risk disturbing the shooting of those who have taken the trouble to get into position in good time and those who wish to stay.
- Park sensibly and considerately. Do not block access to fields or private land.
- Do not shoot in the immediate vicinity of houses adjoining the shore; be aware of footpaths and never shoot in a way that endangers people using them.
- Avoid disturbing or shooting towards livestock.
- There are no statutory bag limits in the UK, but some clubs impose limits for their own marshes. Your personal limit may depend on the local conditions and, indeed, your own experience. Shooting excessive numbers of birds is considered by the majority of wildfowling to be unacceptable and unsporting. Ensure all shot quarry is put to good use.
- Ensure that your dog is comfortable – if you sit on your game bag, make sure your dog has a dry seat, too.

- Regularly look through your gun barrels to make sure that they are clear of any obstruction. Semi-automatic and pump action shotguns are not easy to check (in low light, unload your gun and use your torch to check the barrel is clear).
- Judging range when wildfowling can be particularly difficult. Try to identify nearby features that can be used as reference points so that you do not shoot beyond the limitations of your cartridge and gun or your own shooting capabilities. Learn what size a goose appears in relation to your barrel when it is in range. Remember, just because another shooter can drop a bird at a certain range, it doesn't mean you can do the same; they may be using a bigger calibre, a heavier load or both. Shooting at out-of-range quarry is unethical and will often be reported to club officials.
- Ensure that you can recognise legal quarry species; if in doubt, don't shoot.
- Never leave cartridge cases and rubbish behind. Leave the marsh as you found it. Pick up any spent cases and rubbish you find, even if it is not yours.

Respect for quarry

- BASC strongly recommends the use of a competent gundog when wildfowling.
- All shot quarry should be retrieved and, if necessary, immediately and humanely despatched.
- If necessary, shoot a wounded bird again to ensure that it can be retrieved quickly and safely (provided it is safe to do so).
- Do not leave a wounded bird unretrieved to shoot at another.
- If you do not have the use of a gundog when wildfowling, go with someone who does or only take shots which will result in birds falling where you can reach them.
- Retrieve all shot birds immediately.
- Don't shoot at birds while your dog is on a retrieve.
- Always allow time for the retrieval of all shot birds before being pushed off by time or tide and having to leave the marsh.

Leaving the marsh

- On leaving the marsh, your dog may be cold and wet – attend to its needs before your own. Dry your dog properly (there are some fantastic fleece jackets available that not only dry the dog and keep it warm but also contain the dirt while travelling).
- Do not waste the birds that you shoot. For a wide range of appetising game recipes, see pages 49 and 50, and visit eatgame.co.uk.
- When leaving the marsh, try to keep shot birds covered, or hidden in a bag, particularly if using public access routes.
- Pay special attention to cleaning your gun – saltwater, mud and sand will quickly corrode it. Check for faults which may need rectifying before the gun is used again.
- Always complete any required bag returns for your day's shooting and return any permits within the required time constraints. This may be a condition of the lease for the foreshore you shoot. Accurate bag data is imperative to ensuring that wildfowling remains for the future.

Guns and ammunition

Guns

- A double-barrelled 12 bore is a suitable all-round shotgun for wildfowling. If your fieldcraft is good you can be very successful with a standard 70mm (2¾ inch) chambered gun and cartridge. Traditionally, however, wildfowlers have often preferred a 76mm (3 inch) chambered gun which enables them to shoot heavier loads with more pellets in their pattern.
- Many wildfowlers now choose to use an 89mm (3½ inch) chambered shotgun, in either double-barrelled or, more commonly, semi-automatic form. This type of gun is designed to handle large steel pellets in modern wildfowling loads (provided the gun is steel shot-proofed).
- Big-bore guns, such as 10, 8 and 4 bore shotguns, are designed to fire large shot loads effectively, but some may find them cumbersome or, indeed, a burden.

If you are unsure whether your gun is capable of handling steel loads, check the BASC website: basc.org.uk/ammunition/using-non-lead-shot-for-live-quarry-shooting

Effective loads

- The effective load will combine pattern (pellet count) and penetration (energy/velocity).
- The measure of potential effectiveness in relation to pellet counts is the number of pellets counted in the traditional 30-inch circle placed over the centre of the pattern, printed on a pattern plate or large sheet of paper. For example, geese need a minimum 55 pellets in that circle; large ducks need 90+; small ducks 140. Effective pellet sizes vary according to the size of the quarry and they require enough energy to ensure penetration of the vital organs. Remember, the smaller the number, the bigger the pellet size.

Recommended shot sizes

Shot sizes for ducks: 5, 4, 3

Shot sizes for geese: 3, 2, 1, BB

With so many shot types on the market, it is important you pattern your gun/cartridge combination to make sure it will deliver the appropriate killing load – provided, as ever, you can consistently centre your pattern on the target.

For a copy of the Wildfowling in the UK Code of Practice, please visit the website (basc.org.uk/wildfowling/advice/wildfowling-code-of-practice) or contact the wildfowl and wetlands department.

4.2 Using a compass on the marsh

Very often the key to a successful wildfowling trip is to go right out from the sea wall onto the marsh in an attempt to reach a point as close to the chosen quarry as possible. An over-ambitious and inexperienced wildfowler can easily lose sense of direction when out of sight of the sea wall and this can lead to a very dangerous situation, especially if sea mist or fog suddenly descends. It is essential for the wildfowler to be well equipped and understand how to use a compass.

What type of compass to use

You can take a bearing from any type of compass providing that the magnetic needle points north. However, it is much better to be able to make an exact bearing in degrees so a chosen point can be accurately pin-pointed.

The type of compass you need is one that is used for orienteering; it is basically an ordinary compass surrounded by a moveable graduated dial and set on a base plate. There is a direction arrow on the plate and this can be lined up with the required bearing. This sort of compass can be bought from most good camping and sports equipment stores. Before going onto the marsh make sure you are familiar with how to take a bearing.

Another useful tool is a GPS handset. In times of thick mist or fog when it is very easy to become disorientated, or if you are unsure of how to take and follow a bearing, the GPS is the best system to use. If you buy one which tracks your movements, you can save and reverse your journey enabling you to return using the same path. All you need to do is add in way points; these are points where you change direction. Not only is this a useful safety feature but can also help negotiate creeks and gutters at their easiest crossing points, making it especially useful in the dark.

4.3 Tides and tide tables

The flow and ebb of the tides over inter-tidal coastal wetlands are affected by the phases of the moon. The new moon and the full moon, which are approximately a fortnight apart, coincide with the maximum spring tide. The tide height falls daily until the neap tides which coincide with the first quarter halfway between the new and full moons and the last quarter halfway between the full and the new moons.

In a spring tide the sea comes in furthest and ebbs to the greatest distance, in a neap tide the ebb and flow is least. The inter-tidal cycle of flow and ebb of the water occurs twice in every 24-hour period, and each day the high tide occurs approximately an hour later than the previous day.

With this change of time of the high tide there also occurs a change in the height of the tide and each year the readings are computed and published in the tide tables which are regularly available from most stationers or ships' chandlers.

It must be remembered that in view of British Summer Time it is necessary to add

an hour onto the Greenwich Mean Times (GMT) given in the tide table up until and including the date when the clocks revert to GMT (usually at the end of October).

Wildfowlers are reminded that on most estuaries there is a tidal correction which must be linked to the local tide table reading in order to obtain the approximate time of high water at the place specifically chosen on the estuary.

Example 1:

On the River Dee, high tide at Chester (some 30 miles up river) is one hour and five minutes after the Liverpool tide table reading; however, at Hilbre Island, which is at the mouth of the estuary, you subtract 16 minutes from the Liverpool tide table reading. It can, therefore, be seen that such corrections are essential if correct time of the tide is to be computed at a specific point.

Wildfowlers are also reminded that the true rise of the tide can be computed by subtracting the low water height from the high water height, for instance: High water at 30.2 feet, low water at four feet indicates a maximum rise of the tide of 26.2 feet over a six-hour period, with the fastest flow of the tide occurring three and four hours after the start of the flood.

Example 2:

On a 24-foot rise in a six-hour period there would be a tidal movement of two feet in the first hour, four feet in the second hour, six feet in the third and fourth hours, four feet in the fifth hour and two feet in the sixth hour, combining to give an overall tidal movement of 24 feet. Normally, there is also a period of apparently 'slack water' at high tide and low tide before the tides turn.

There are certain circumstances when a normal tidal flow and ebb can be changed quite dramatically. A classic example of this is when a period of exceptionally strong westerly gales coincides with a very high spring tide.

Then the Atlantic Ocean may be driven through the Pentland Firth to cause a general build-up of water in the North Sea. The worst disasters of flooding on the East Coast have been due to this cause, even though the wind may have been off-shore.

When the wind veers to the north-east, or east, after the pile-up of the Atlantic water into the North Sea then the flooding effect is even greater.

It therefore follows that all tide conditions can be affected by wind and this must also be taken into account by the wildfowler, bearing in mind that storm surges have been known to exceed by six feet the predicted tide table reading.

4.4 The Beaufort wind scale

Always take special care when shooting in tidal areas. Full details concerning tide tables and the Beaufort Wind Scale are included for your additional information and assistance.

Wind Force	MPH	Wind	Sea
0	1	Calm	Like a mirror
1	1-3	Light	Ripples without foam crests
2	4-7	Light breeze	Small wavelets
3	8-11	Gentle breeze	Large wavelets: crests begin to break
4	12-18	Mod. breeze	Small waves: frequent white horses
5	19-24	Fresh breeze	Moderate waves: many white horses
6	25-31	Strong breeze	Large waves: begin to form white foam crests
7	32-38	Near gale	Sea heaps up: white foam begins to be blown in streaks
8	39-47	Gale	Moderate high waves of greater length: foam blown in well-marked streaks
9	48-54	Strong gale	High waves: crests begin to topple and roll over. Spray may affect visibility
10	55-63	Storm	Very high waves: long over- hanging crests tumbling; sea becomes heavy and shocking
11	64-72	Violent storm	Exceptionally high waves: sea covered by long patches of foam
12	73-81	Hurricane	Air filled with foam and spray completely white

4.5 Biosecurity: shooting and the countryside

Biosecurity refers to all the measures taken to minimise the risk of infectious diseases caused by viruses, bacteria or other microorganisms entering, emerging, establishing or spreading as a result of our actions.

Good biosecurity helps to ensure the overall health of the wider environment, protects individual species, and can help maintain the health of any released ducks or gamebirds.

For example, when it comes to gamebird rearing and releasing, the Animal Plant and Health Association (APHA) has identified that the most important factor in reducing the impact of avian influenza is good biosecurity which is practised and applied properly. These same practices also help to stop the spread of other diseases including mycoplasma, coccidiosis and hexamita.

The measures put in place to mitigate potential risks also help to limit the spread of alien invasive species that can cause serious environmental problems.

You can do your bit to help to protect the environment, your season ahead and the future of you shooting sports by undertaking some relatively small steps, such as checking, cleaning, and drying your kit regularly.

Disease and invasive alien species (IAS) can be spread in a number of ways including, but not limited to:

- Contamination of vehicles, equipment, clothing and footwear, which moves invasive alien species or disease between areas.
- Using equipment which has not been effectively cleansed and disinfected.
- Through wild birds transporting or leaving behind contaminated faecal matter.
- Vermin or wild birds accessing poorly maintained houses, feed or bedding.
- Birds (released or wild) drinking from contaminated water sources or eating contaminated feed.
- In the marine environment this could also apply to boat, or in-ballast, water.

Basic biosecurity we can take into the field

As shooters and countryside users we can all play our part in maintaining good biosecurity, therefore reducing the potential risk of transmission of both diseases and IAS:

- Regularly check, clean, and dry your footwear, clothing and all associated equipment.
- Use pressure washers, brushes, hoses, water and fresh supplies of an appropriate disinfectant when cleaning, ideally to be undertaken in areas where there is drainage into a water network.
- Ensure vehicles are cleaned frequently; wash all areas, paying particular attention to wheels, under wheel arches, flat-beds and vehicle footwells.
- Maintain good hand hygiene and consider the use of nitrile gloves where appropriate.
- Consider using different footwear or clothing when you move between locations if foot dips or kit washing facilities are not available.
- If using disinfectant, ensure it is appropriate for its intended use, of the right concentration and that it is changed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The level of boot dip should always be at least ankle deep and care should be taken to position the boot dip to allow for simple and safe use.
- When moving between sites vulnerable to disease or IAS, visit the most vulnerable sites first to reduce risk of disease transfer or contamination from other sites.

- Use game bags, roe sacks and carcass trays for the rear of vehicles when transporting game, wildfowl and deer. Regularly clean these devices and adhere to good game handling practices. Even your dog can transport organic matter such as fungi, bacteria and insects.
- Report any invasive non-native sightings to the relevant authority, e.g. any trees that you suspect are in ill-health to the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry and Natural Resources Wales.

**For more information on biosecurity, please visit the BASC website
basc.org.uk/biosecurity-shooting-and-the-countryside**

**For advice and guidance on safe handling and preparation of shot game,
visit: basc.org.uk/small-game-preparation**



5. Wild food

5.1 Preparation

Food hygiene is paramount. All game preparation must be carried out with good food hygiene being the number one priority.

When transporting shot quarry, BASC advises members to adhere to the Code of Good Shooting Practice's *Guide to Good Game Handling*. If you're preparing game for the table, follow guidance set out by The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and NHS England.

The following guidance only relates to game being processed, stored, and cooked for personal consumption.

Those operating as a food business, including the primary producer, need to comply with the hygiene regulations for supplying game for human consumption.

There are also rules and regulations relating to the sale and supply of game meat to others which must be complied with. For more information on regulations in your area, please visit the country specific websites below.

Scotland - [foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/wild-game-guides-and-haccp](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/publications/wild-game-guides-and-haccp)

England, Wales and Northern Ireland - [basc.org.uk/wildgameguidance](https://www.basc.org.uk/wildgameguidance)

In the field

The process of good game handling begins as soon as the shot game is in the hand. This include keeping it clean, protecting it from contamination, rapid cooling to 4°C or below, and correct storage until it is processed.

For more information on how to do this, please visit the Game Handling Guide on the BASC website [basc.org.uk/advice/game-handling-guide](https://www.basc.org.uk/advice/game-handling-guide).

Storage at home prior to preparation

There are specific legal rules on the storage of game which must be followed if it is being supplied to others. It is a good principle to follow these for home consumption. Key basics are to keep it cool, dry and away from any source of contamination, e.g. flies.

Some people like to hang game to improve its flavour. The time allowed for this is a matter of personal preference, however this will be affected by factors such as the species and the storage facilities you have available. For example, hanging time would reduce (if undertaken at all) if you don't have suitable refrigerated storage facilities or the ambient temperature is not sufficiently cool.

Carcass preparation

- Hands are one of the main ways germs are spread. You should wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water before starting any food preparation task. You should wear disposable gloves and change them regularly during the process.
- Any cuts and scrapes on your skin must be covered, and you should not process game if you are feeling unwell.
- Clean and sanitise your prep area before, during and after all preparation. Use a food-safe steriliser and use disposable cloths for cleaning up afterwards.
- Pluck or skin your birds in a well-ventilated area away from food preparation areas.
- Frequently clean your knife between cuts to avoid contaminating the meat. Continue to inspect the carcass, and any meat with obvious irregularities should not be put into the food chain.
- You should not wash raw meat. Washing meat under a tap can splash bacteria onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops. Washing raw meat can spread harmful bacteria like campylobacter.
- Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.
- Waste materials associate with game preparation for personal use/consumption can be disposed of in normal household refuse following normal rules, ie. a sealed bin bag placed straight into outside general waste bin.

Food storage and cooking

- Keep all raw meat in covered containers on the bottom shelf of fridge to avoid raw juices contaminating other foods.
- A freezer acts as a pause button – food in a freezer won't deteriorate and most bacteria cannot grow in it. When freezing ensure the meat is properly packed to reduce wastage as a result of freezer burn.
- Date and label all meat to ensure effective freezer rotation.
- When you take your food out of the freezer, it's important to defrost it safely before cooking or eating it. Don't defrost food at room temperature. Ideally, food should be defrosted fully in the fridge.
- Make sure your food is fully defrosted before cooking. Partially defrosted food may not cook evenly, meaning that harmful bacteria could survive the cooking process. Once food has been defrosted, eat it within 24 hours.
- Do not cross contaminate raw and cooked meat through chopping boards, utensils, or any other contact. All equipment must be thoroughly washed with hot water and food safe soap between uses and left to air dry.
- Standard advice is to cook food until it has reached 70°C and stayed at that temperature for two minutes (FSA guidance). Invest in a temperature probe to ensure this temperature is reached.

5.2 Recipes

Pan-fried breast of mallard

This Asian-inspired dish was developed by Eat Game chef Jose Souto.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 4 mallard duck breast
- 90g honey
- 150ml dark soy sauce
- 2 pieces glace stem ginger
- 100g glass noodles dry weight
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 1 red pepper, finely sliced
- 2 fresh red chillies to make 500ml of sweet chilli sauce
- 1l white wine vinegar
- 6tsp honey oil



1. Take the mallard and with a sharp knife score the skin finely.
2. In a bowl place the honey, soy sauce and finely chopped glace stem ginger. Mix this well and pour into a shallow dish.
3. Lay the duck breasts into the soy marinade skin side down, then cover and leave in fridge overnight. The next day turn them over so they marinate on the other side for an hour or two.
4. Cut the chillies in half and remove the seeds, slice into very thin strips and then chop finely.
5. Add some oil to the pan. When the oil is hot, quickly stir fry the chillies until the oil turns a reddish colour, then add white wine vinegar, bring to the boil and add the honey.
6. Allow to reduce by half. The sauce should have thickened slightly so that it just coats the back of the spoon. When it goes cold it will become a lot thicker so do not reduce it too much. Allow the sauce to cool. It can be stored in a clean jar or bottle and refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.
7. Take the noodles, place them in a bowl and pour over enough boiling water to cover and leave for 5 to 8 minutes to soften then drain.
8. Once the duck has marinated, pat it dry and place it fat side down in a cold non-stick frying pan. As the pan gets hot, the fat will render down and the skin will crisp up.
9. When the skin browns, turn the duck over and cook for 4 minutes.
10. Remove the duck breast from the pan and allow to rest for another 4 minutes.
11. In the same pan fry off the red pepper for 5 minutes, then add the spring onion and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add 50ml of sweet chilli sauce and the noodles and sauté well.
12. Place a portion of noodles on the plate, thinly slice the duck then lay it on the noodles and enjoy.

Mallard with wild thyme and green peppercorns

This is one of the recipes from Jean-Francois Mallet's book *Recipes from the Woods*.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 2 mallard ducks, plucked, gutted and cut into pieces
- 1tbsp sunflower oil
- 2tbsp soy sauce
- 50g green peppercorns in brine, drained
- 500ml whipping or double (heavy) cream
- 10 sprigs of wild thyme
- Salt

1. Season the duck pieces with salt.
2. Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish over high heat.
3. Add the duck pieces and sear for 5 minutes until coloured on all sides.
4. Reduce the heat, add the soy sauce and deglaze the casserole by scraping the cooking juices off the bottom of the dish and incorporate into the soy sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes to reduce the liquid.
5. Add the green peppercorns and cream and simmer for about 25 minutes over low heat.
6. Add the thyme sprigs to the casserole, stir to mix, and serve.





6. Research

6.1 The Wing Survey

We ask shooters to collect the wings from all ducks, geese and waders they shoot to help us demonstrate the sustainability of the sport. These wings provide us with invaluable information on the age and gender ratios of wild populations which can in turn be used to show that a sustainable proportion of the quarry populations is taken. In order for this survey to reach its full potential, you can help us by continuing to submit wings year on year and also encourage others to take part.

How to take part

Remove one wing from each duck (excluding reared and released mallard), goose or wader that you shoot.

Place all wings from the same day and location in the same zip-lock bag and write the species, date and the county in which they were shot (include your club name if you would like a club report).

Seal the bag and place in the freezer.

Then, either:

- Post your wings to BASC Head Office
(DWS, BASC, Marford Mill, Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0HL).
- Arrange to drop off the wings at your BASC regional office.

Or

Thanks to the availability of the Epicollect 5 app, we are now able to gather data from **geese** without the need to remove the wings. Download the Epicollect 5 app here and follow the steps in the image to submit your data. If you don't have access to a smartphone, you can still submit goose wings in the same way as duck wings, outlined below.

Please visit [basc.org.uk/conservation-in-action/projects/wing-survey](https://www.basc.org.uk/conservation-in-action/projects/wing-survey) for more details.

6.2 Ring recovery

Duck ringing in Britain and Ireland has quite a history and much of the BTO's duck ringing totals come from years of intensive trapping and ringing by the duck ringing network led by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT).

Bird ringing generates information on the survival, productivity and movements of birds, helping us to understand why populations are changing. Rings are more likely to be found on quarry species, providing an excellent opportunity to collect really good samples of data and identify trends in our shootable species.

If you shoot a bird which has a leg ring, please do submit your findings to the BTO so that this data can contribute to species monitoring.

To report your ring finding, please visit the website link - app.bto.org/euring/lang/pages/rings.jsp

In return you will get a history about the bird you have shot, where it was originally ringed and when and if it has been recaptured.

6.3 Rice breast (sarcosystosis)

Rice breast disease is a parasitic disease causing cysts that resemble grains of rice to appear in the muscles. The disease can also result in decreased survival rates of wildfowl populations.

The rice breast project relies on data submissions from the shooting community to enable us to monitor the prevalence and spread of the disease, allowing us to better understand its impacts on our wildfowl populations. We ask that shooters remain vigilant and report any findings of rice breast disease via our UK wildfowl sarcocystosis survey form - sarcocystissurvey.org.uk/survey-form/

Please visit <https://basc.org.uk/conservation-in-action/projects/rice-breast/> for more details.

6.4 Duck Nest Monitoring Project

This project is dedicated to the conservation of wild mallard populations which are declining in UK and Europe. The aim of the project is to monitor the breeding success of mallards nesting in artificial structures such as nest tubes which offer greater protection from disturbances, resulting in increased brood sizes and hatching success.

So far, we have received very promising results and are aiming to increase our participation rates. We ask the shooting community to install duck nest tubes and report their occupancy and success each year. Participation in this project contributes greatly to our effort to increase wild mallard populations and the data we receive is vital to our understanding of their breeding success.

How to take part

1. Make and install a nesting tube on the land you own or shoot over.
2. Record as much information as you can about the site, species occupying the nests, and their hatching success.
3. Report your findings to the Waterfowlers' Network online form at the end of the mallard breeding season - waterfowlersnetwork.com/2219.

Please visit basc.org.uk/conservation-in-action/projects/duck-nest-monitoring-project for more details.

6.5 Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) monitors non-breeding waterbirds throughout the UK. It follows a tradition that began in 1947, providing a valuable source of data on species population trends, abundance and distribution. The WeBS initiative is hugely important in monitoring our migratory wildfowl populations. Although it does not provide us with an overall population figure – often referred to as a ‘census’ – it has proven to be one of the best monitoring tools in Europe. Currently there are a number of vacant sites around the country which require volunteers.

Anyone with an interest in wildfowl and a few spare Sundays available, should get in touch with their local WeBS co-ordinator and contribute to this valuable dataset. As a contributor, you can then be safe in the knowledge that the information collected is helping to ensure decisions made relating to the sport of wildfowling are based on evidence and science rather than a precautionary approach based on misguided assumptions.

Science now forms a huge part of our shooting activities, and it is vital that we are at the forefront of data collection, helping to monitor the species we know and love. Only then can we confidently stand up to external scrutiny to guarantee a sustainable future for wildfowling.

How to take part in WeBS

1. Visit app.bto.org/websonline/sites/vacant/vacant-sites.jsp#lon=-4.5263672&lat=54.8006849&zoom=5 to use the interactive map of vacant sites.
2. Find a site near you – the map is colour coded to show the priority level of vacant sites.
3. Once you have found a vacant site click on it. This will bring up further information about the site.
4. Click ‘View Details’ to email the local WeBS organiser to enquire about being a counter.



Image: Top Shots photo comp 2022/Clive Elliston

7. Further information

7.1 Wildfowling information

The BASC members' magazine, *Shooting and Conservation*, regularly includes articles relating to wildfowling. The BASC website basc.org.uk contains much information of specific interest to wildfowling as well as useful advice about shooting in general.

Insurance

It is advisable to have adequate legal liability third party insurance when shooting. Membership of BASC currently provides insurance. For more information, please visit basc.org.uk/join-basc/basc-members-insurance

7.2 Wildfowling clubs

There are around 140 BASC-affiliated wildfowling clubs across the UK.

Further information

References

- *Code of Good Shooting Practice*
- *BASC Handbook of Shooting*
- *BASC Shotgun Code of Practice*
- *BASC Wildfowling Code of Practice*
- *BASC Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice*

Disclaimer. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided in this book is true and factual at the time of publication. It is, however, subject to change, either by BASC, its partners included within, or the governmental bodies. This publication should not be regarded or relied upon as a complete or authoritative statement of the law. It is the reader's responsibility to check whether the information remains up to date and relevant. BASC takes no responsibility for the contents of linked websites within this document, or any misinterpretation of the contents of this publication.

Notes

Notes

Notes

Contact numbers for BASC country and regional centres

COUNTRY CENTRES:

BASC HEAD OFFICE	-	TEL: 01244 573 000
BASC SCOTLAND	-	TEL: 01350 723 226
BASC WALES	-	TEL: 01244 573 029
BASC NORTHERN IRELAND	-	TEL: 02892 605 050

REGIONAL CENTRES:

North – Tel: 01244 573 040

Covers the following areas: *Isle of Man, Northumberland, Cumbria, County Durham, Cleveland, North Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Manchester, Cheshire, Tyneside.*

Central – Tel: 01283 810 910

Covers the following areas: *Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.*

South East – Tel: 01244 573 028

Covers the following areas: *Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and London.*

South West – Tel: 01884 260 910

Covers the following areas: *Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Channel Islands, Herefordshire and Isles of Scilly.*

East – Tel: 01244 573 032

Covers the following areas: *Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Essex.*



The British Association for Shooting & Conservation

Marford Mill, Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0HL

To join BASC, please call 01244 573 030

9am – 6pm every weekday, with answerphone service out of those hours

Or log on to basc.org.uk

General enquiries: 01244 573 000

For wildfowling enquires, email wildfowling@basc.org.uk