



Lindisfarne Wildfowling  
Management Group  
Report  
for 2020/21 season



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## Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

This report represents a comprehensive review of the work undertaken by the Lindisfarne Wildfowling Management Group (LWMG) over the past year including wardening work undertaken by The British Association for Shooting & Conservation (BASC) under contract to Natural England (NE). This report contains information on the use of the reserve by wildfowling over the 2020-2021 season, all bag return details, incident reports, wildfowl peak count data and records of permit uptake and returns. The report also contains the views of those managing wildfowling on the site and suggestions for future improvements.

## Chapter 2

## PERMIT ISSUE

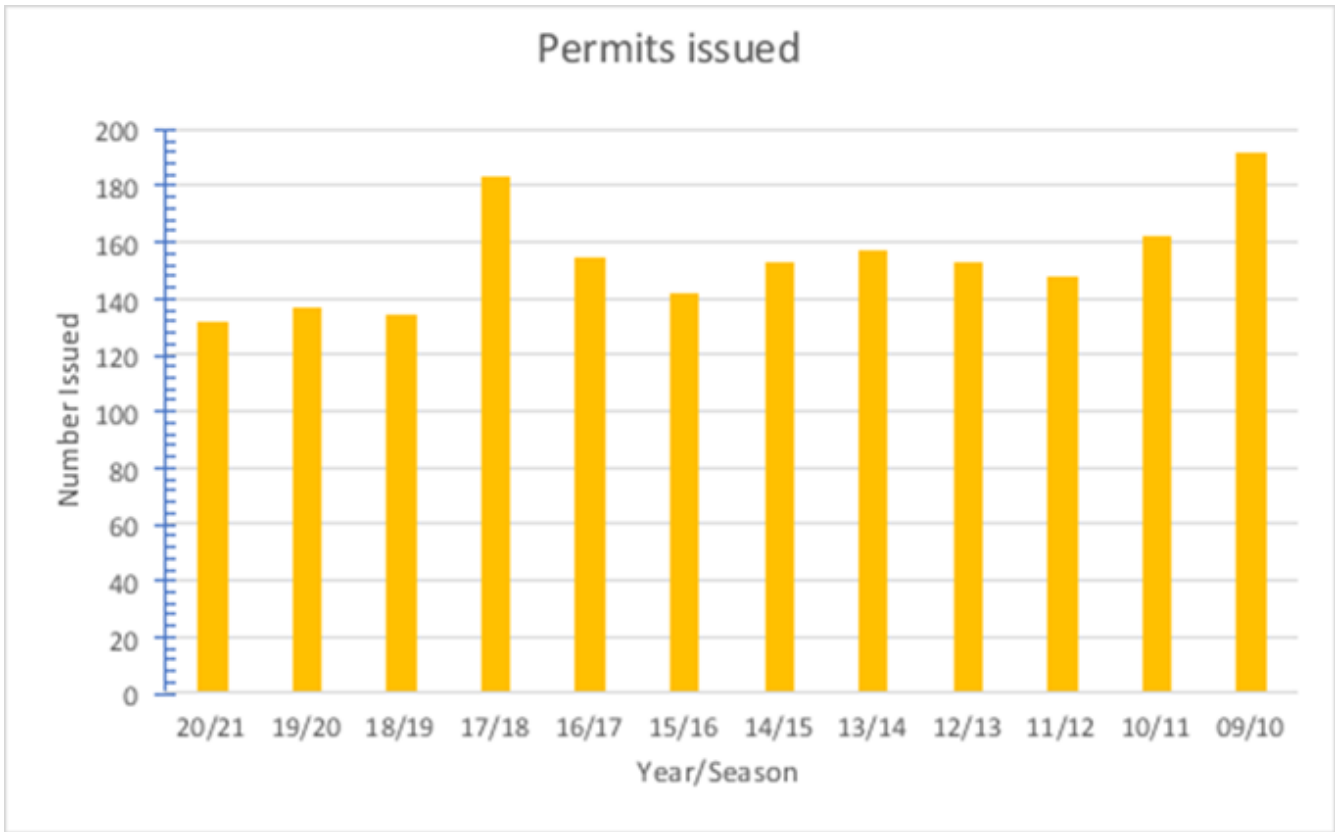
Seasonal permits were issued, on a block basis by: BASC, Wildfowling department. Ten (10) complimentary permits, eight (8) punt gunning permits (4 national and 4 Holy Island) were available. The introductory permit scheme is now a standard element within the scheme with its limited availability of 8 permits. Permits are issued on behalf of Natural England by BASC. The total number of available permits was 216.

**Table 1 Number of permits issued**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>ALLOCATION</b>	<b>NO. ISSUED</b>
N.D.W.A.	100	(number issued included in LWMG)
Holy Island	40	6
LWMG	200	114
Punt National	4	(4)
Punt Holy Island	4	(1)
Complimentary	10	7
Introductory	8	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>132</b>

**A total of 132 permits were taken for the 2020/21 season.**

I am confident that numbers would have exceeded previous season had the Covid pandemic not caused so much disruption



**Table 2** Number of permits returned

Season	No. Issued	No. returned on time	No. returned late	No. not returned
20/21	132	120	12	0
19/20	137	125	12	0
18/19	134	129	5	0
17/18	183	178	5	0
16/17	155	155	0	0
15/16	142	142	0	0
14/15	153	148	0	5
13/14	157	157	0	0
12/13	153	149	0	4
11/12	148	131	0	17

Numbers of permits issued have remained around the previous years. Sadly Covid took a toll on numbers issued for this season. Fingers crossed for the 2021/22 season and a return to a more normal routine.



Below: Is an example of the 2020/21 permit

### RESTRICTIONS & CONDITIONS

You must abide by the current restrictions and conditions supplied with this permit.

Your completed bag return must be returned by 7 March 2021 to:  
 BASC South West Office, Unit 10/E, Dufford Business Park, Broad Road, Dufford, Devon EX15 2DY  
 or scanned and sent to southwest@basc.org.uk


Bag Office: 01280 381 470  
 Warden: 07803 228 415


ENSURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THE CHANGES TO THE SHOOTING ZONE PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST VISIT

**WHT Stamp 2020/21**  
 Pink-footed geese flying over Cockerham Marsh by Rodger McPhail

The purchase of the Wildlife Habitat Trust's Habitat Conservation Stamp is a vital contribution to funds that are spent buying and managing land for the joint benefit of conservation and shooting.

www.wht.org.uk






## WILDFOWL PERMIT

COMPLIMENTARY

### Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve Northumberland

PERMIT TO SHOOT 2020/2021  
 Valid from 1 September 2020 to 20 February 2021  
**MUST BE CARRIED AT ALL TIMES**




Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Permit No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Issued by BASC in their capacity as members of the LWMG.  
 Supported by Northumberland and Durham Wildfowling Association,  
 together with Newcastle Wildfowling.

**Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve – Map of Shooting Zones and Access Points**



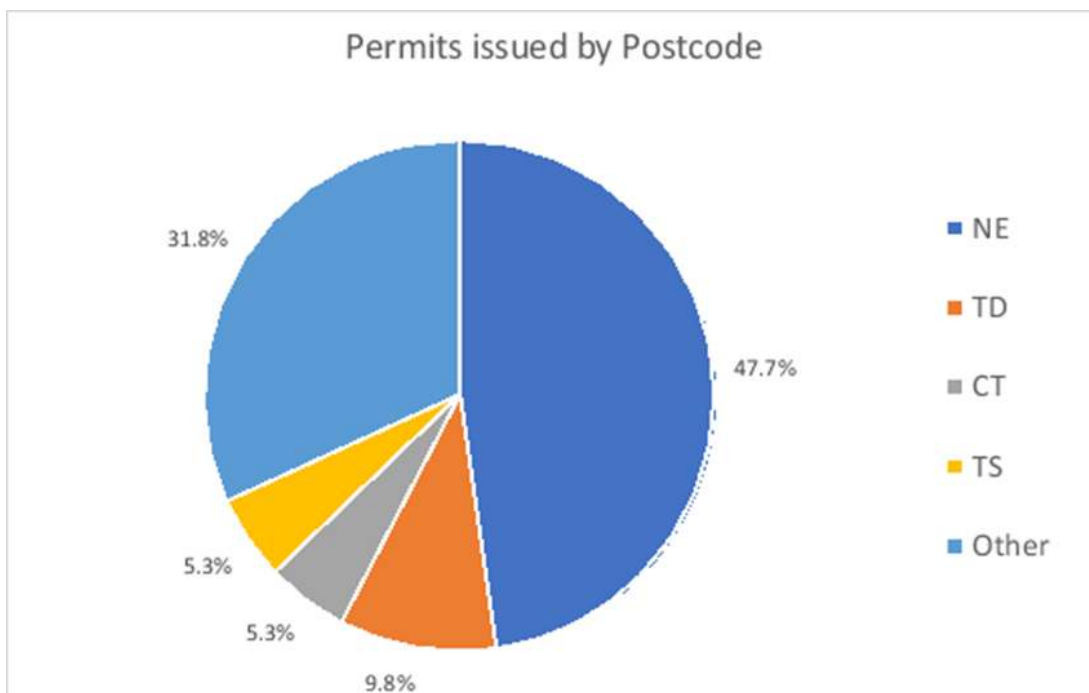
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data (© Crown Copyright 2018). All rights reserved.

Notes:

Above: The **no shooting zone** is clearly identified within the 2021/22 permit application pack, to ensure all permit holders understood the new restrictions.

Any rules and booking in amendments will also be agreed and incorporated for the coming season.

## Chapter 3 PERMIT USAGE ANALYSIS



Left: A big change from last season with only 1 EH postcode taking a permit and the second biggest category being outside of the locale.

**Table 3 Breakdown of area visits and birds taken**

2020/21 season					2019/20 season				
Zone no.	visits	total birds	Avg.	% of total visits	Zone no.	visits	total birds	Avg.	% of total visits
5	89	80	0.89	18.2	5	102	90	0.88	19.1
6	53	60	1.13	10.8	6	98	65	0.66	18.3
7	50	53	1.06	10.2	7	41	41	0.53	7.6
8	26	27	1.03	5.3	8	35	28	0.8	6.5
9	46	52	1.13	9.4	9	57	38	0.66	10.69
10	21	18	0.85	4.3	10	24	27	1.12	4.5
11	16	37	2.31	3.2	11	17	16	0.94	3.1
12	125	111	0.8	25.6	12	84	47	0.56	15.75
13	61	51	0.83	12.5	13	72	41	0.56	13.5
14	0	0	0	0	14	3	1	0.33	0.5

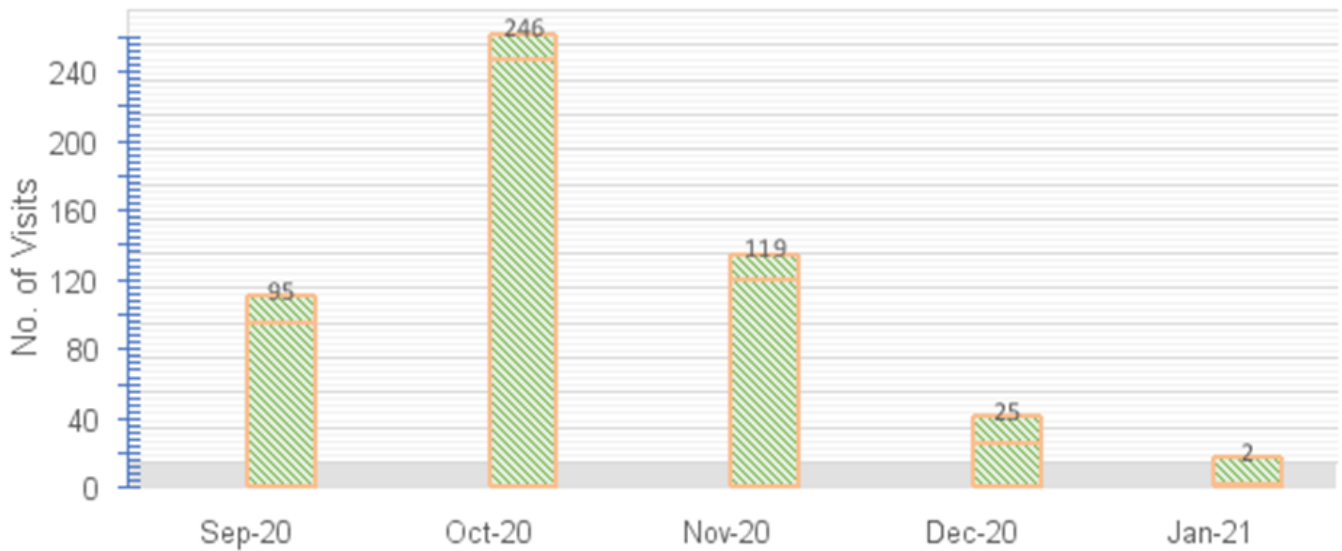
**Above:**

The tables show a breakdown of visits, total birds, average birds per visit and overall visits per zone over the entire NNR for the past two seasons. This data is key to understand how the changes in the shooting zone have altered the wildfowlers use of the site. As might be expected visits to zones 10/11/12 had significantly decreased in the 2018/19 season. These remain similar to last seasons number however with the increase in Pinkfoot goose numbers on the NNR area 12 has seen an increase in visit numbers and birds taken. Now that permit holders are aware of parking and procedures on the causeway the area is being used with more confidence. There seems to be a relatively broad distribution of extra visits to zones 5/6/7/8/9 as there are good parking options to allow for tide fighting. (i.e. not being forced to leave by an incoming tide due to parking area flooding)



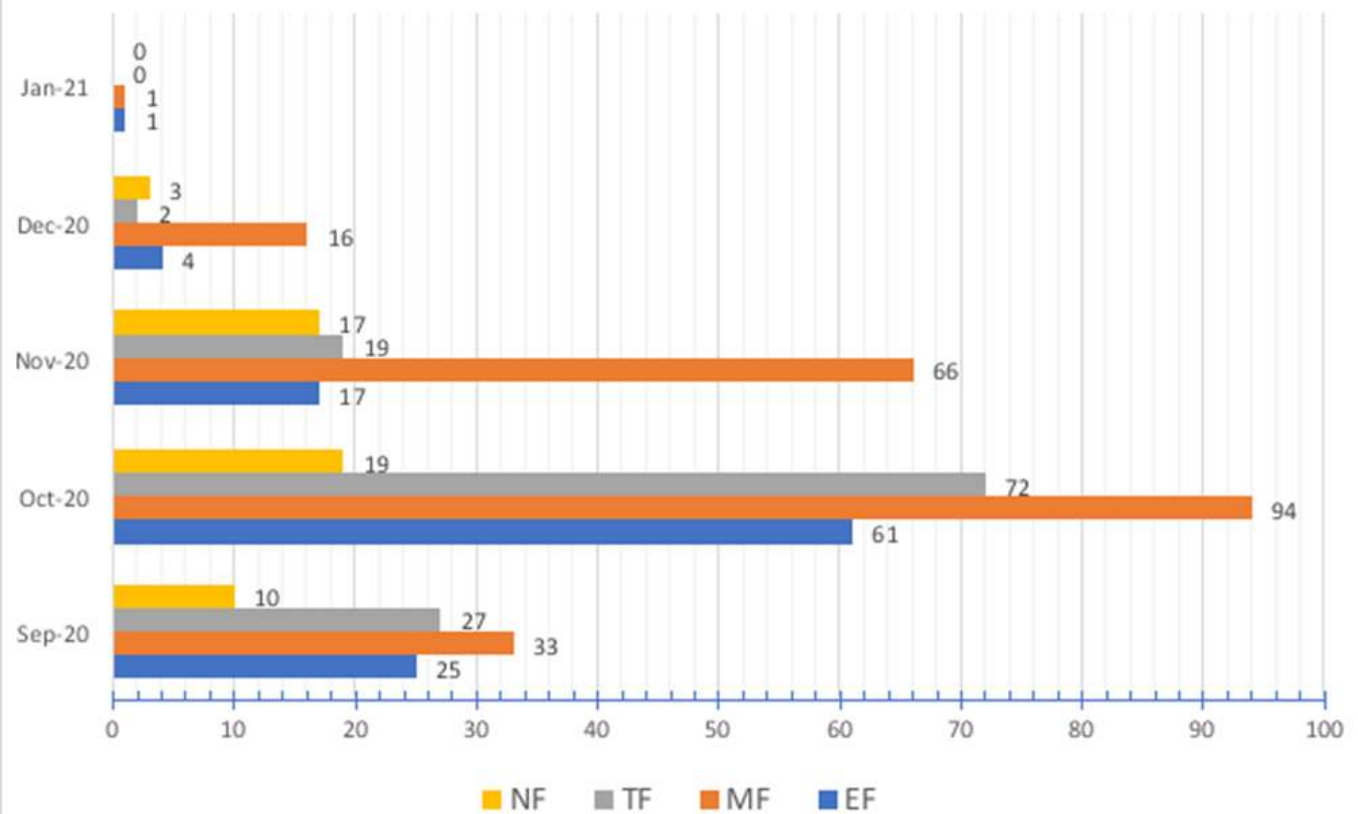
## Visits by Month 2020/21

Total 487



As in previous seasons, permit visits peak in October mirroring the maximum Wigeon and Pink-foot goose counts.

## Flight Times analysis 2020/21



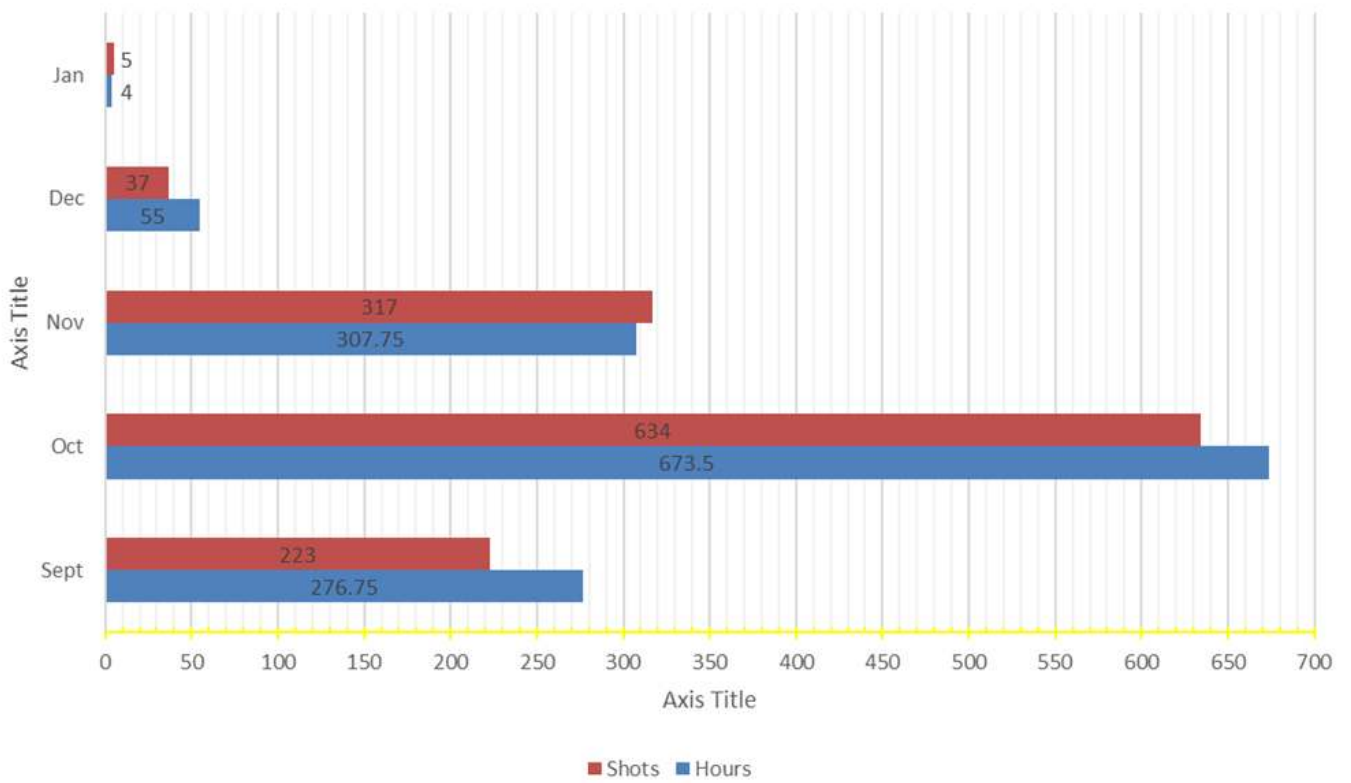
TF Tide flight

MF Morning flight

EF Evening flight

NF Night flight

Hours spent shooting vs Shots fired 2020/21



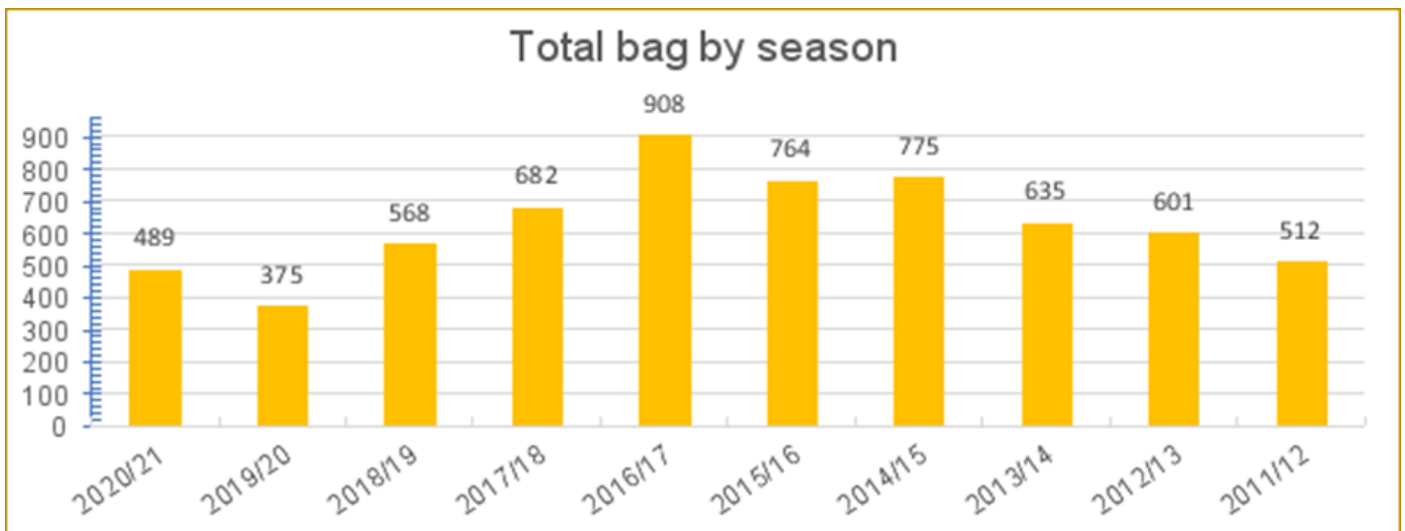
No. of visits by season



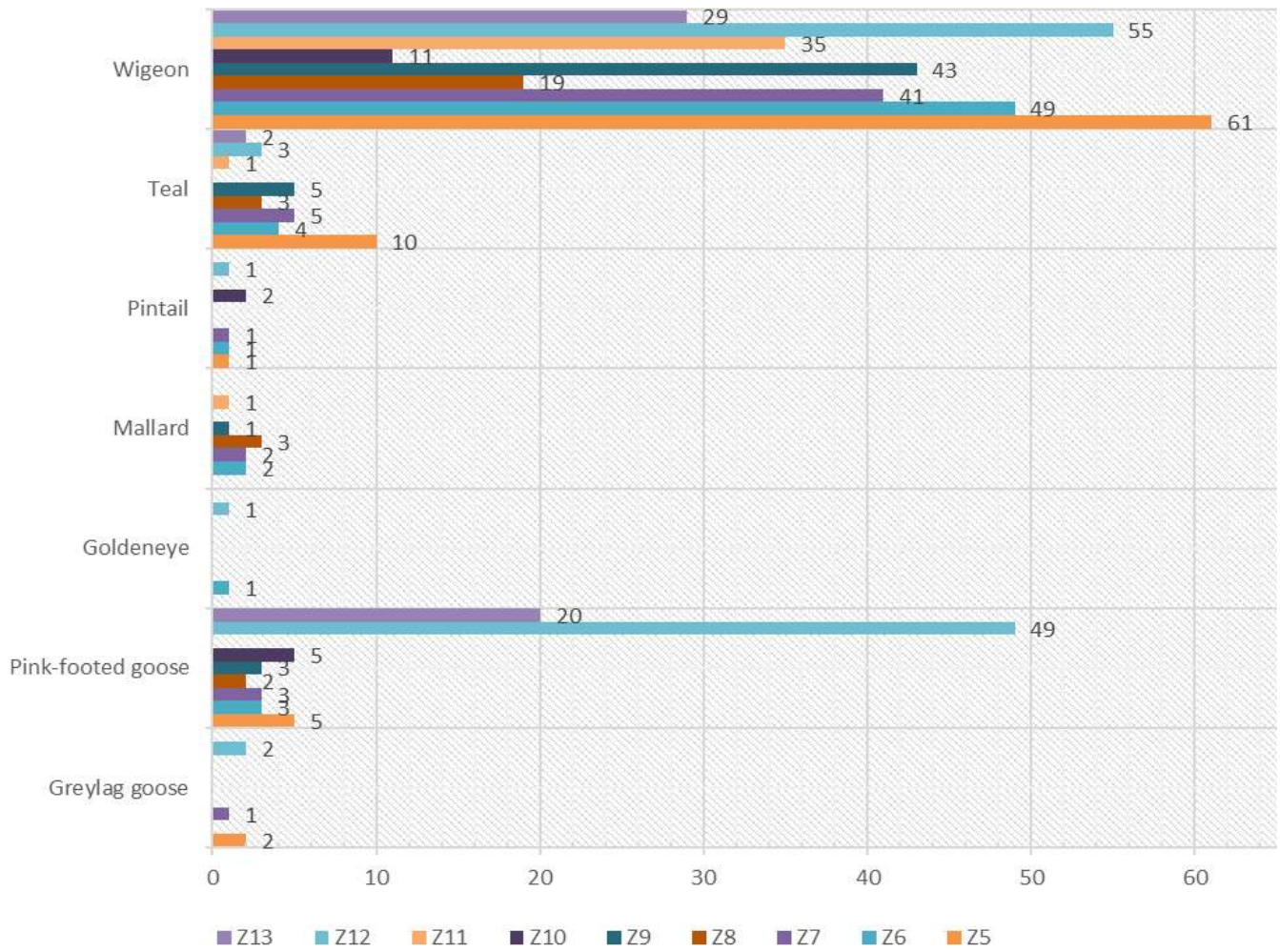


**Table 4 Bag return data for 2020 / 2021 season**

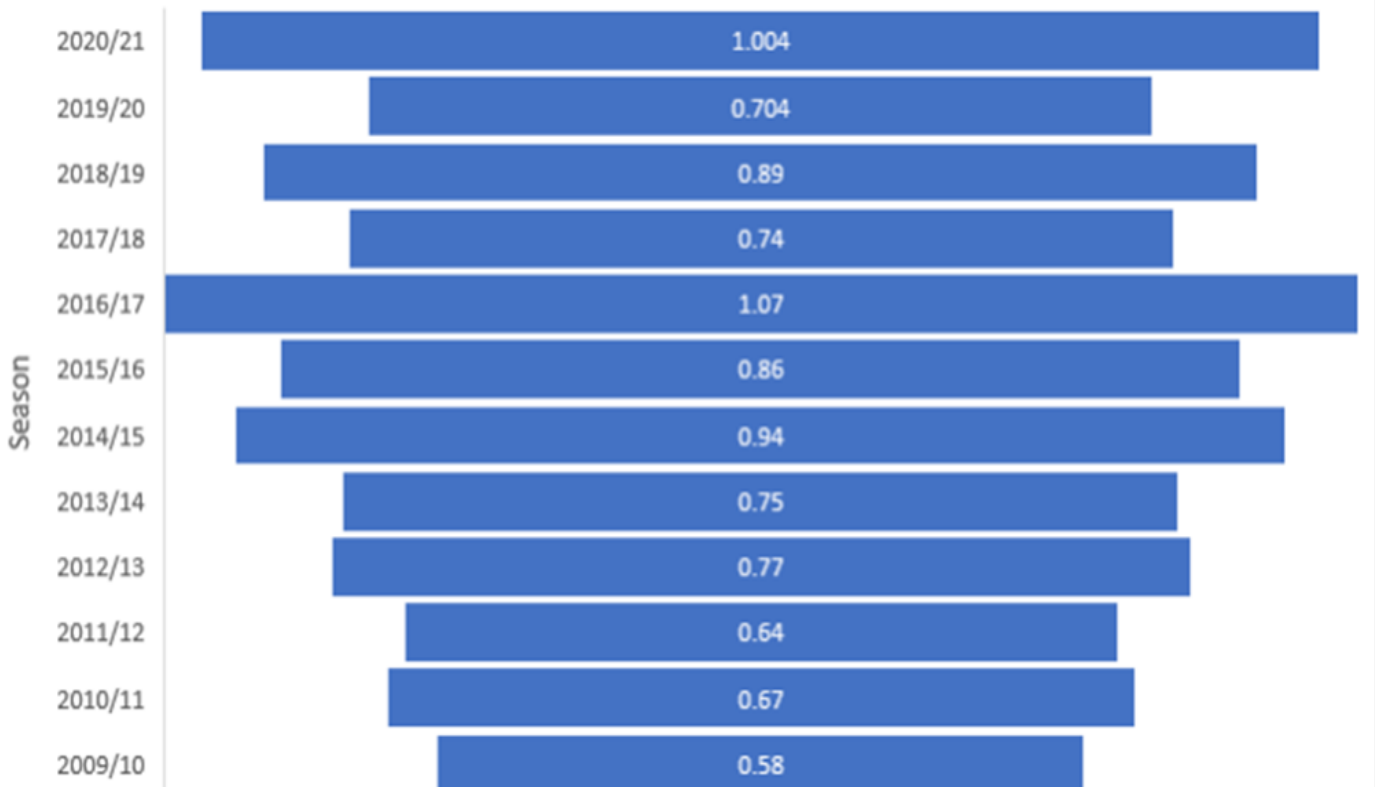
	01/09/2020 – 20/02/2021	% of overall bag
Canada goose	1	0.02
Greylag goose	5	0.10
Pink-footed goose	90	18
White-fronted goose	-	
Coot	-	
Gadwall	-	
Goldeneye	2	0.04
Mallard	9	0.18
Moorhen	-	
Pintail	6	0.012
Pochard	-	
Ruddy duck	-	
Scaup	-	
Shoveller	-	
Teal	33	6.7
Tufted duck	-	
Wigeon	343	70.1
Common snipe	-	
Golden plover	-	
Jack snipe	-	
Woodcock	-	
<b>Total Birds</b>	<b>489</b>	
<b>Total Visits</b>	<b>487</b>	
<b>Individual Visitors</b>		
<b>Visits Without Quarry</b>	<b>266</b>	
<b>Average Quarry Per Visit</b>	<b>1.004</b>	
<b>Visits Per km2 during the wildfowling season (173 days)</b>		



## Species taken by Zone



## Average bag per visit



**Table 5 Punt bag composition 2020 / 2021 season**

Month	No. of visits	Shots	No. of wigeon	Other birds
Sept	0	0	0	0
Oct	1	1	37	0
Nov	0	0	0	0

The punt permit scheme allows a total of 8 permits issued every year. There are 4 issued nationally and 4 to Holy Island residents. Punt returns show 5 puntsmen took permits. 4 National and 1 Holy islander. Only 1 puntsmen visited Lindisfarne this year due to the Covid pandemic and tiers restrictions causing issues.

We are changing the punt booking system as of next season to allow greater flexibility and ease of contacting permit holders at short notice. Previously puntsmen have liaised directly with the wildfowling warden to book in trips but this season proved problematic so change is required. In future all punting bookings will be via the Permit administration team at BASC with all details forwarded to the NNR team before their visit.

The overall composition of the two main quarry species shot at Lindisfarne (Wigeon and Pink-footed goose) remains consistent with previous seasons.



**Pink-footed geese**

2020/21...90	18%
2019/20...97	26%
2018/19...108	16%
2017/18...72	12.7%

The increase in Pink-footed population percentage reported last season has continued this season both locally and nationally.

Pink-foot sightings as far South as the Severn estuary have been reported and with Covid reducing shooting through the last season will no doubt cause an increase in population numbers for the coming season.

Normal trend on influx in September October then decrease to around 2000 and remain steady throughout the remainder of the season.

**Wigeon**

2020/21...343	70%
2019/20...213	57%
2018/19...377	66%
2017/18...413	60%

Peak Wigeon numbers increased from the two previous seasons to 19000 in October from 16,000 in the previous 2 years. These figures do not include Budle bay population which was around 3500.



In very simple terms the amount of birds harvested fluctuate in line with site trend data as expected for both Pinkfoot geese and Wigeon

## Chapter 5

## WILDFOWL COUNTS

The table below shows wildfowl counts for the 2020/21 season. The wildfowling warden conducted the counts at least thrice weekly. The counts concentrated on gaining accurate peak counts for all species but focussing on Wigeon and Brent geese.

It was discussed with Colin to look at adding Canada goose numbers to the current count list. A potential increase in population in the local area may cause problems in the future with feral population establishing itself. Colin has reported Canada geese numbers in the area have remained stable and no increase to be worried about. We will continue monitor the area population.

The warden peak counts often differ from WeBS counts because the higher frequency of counting (WeBS is monthly) and is therefore a more sensitive measure of actual birds using the NNR. The NNR coordinated WeBS counts covers the whole NNR (In addition to Holy Island Sands & Fenham Flats - Goswick Sands, North Shore, Ross Sands, Holy Island and Budle Bay).

**Table 6 Wildfowl Warden Peak counts of quarry species**

	SEPT	OCT	Nov	DEC	JAN	FEB
<b>WIGEON</b>	9100	23000	19000	3000	700	3000
<b>TEAL</b>	140	180	40	120	14	300
<b>MALLARD</b>	62	32	26	26	12	42
<b>GREYLAG</b>	150	300	110	10	40	60
<b>PINK-FOOTED</b>	1200	11000	6500	800	2000	3000
<b>PINTAIL</b>	132	120	60	170	190	400

**Table 7 Wildfowl Warden Peak counts of non-quarry species**

	SEPT	OCT	Nov	DEC	JAN	FEB
<b>BRENT</b>	3300	4200	3000	1700	700	600
<b>WHOOPER</b>	0	11	26	28	0	37
<b>BARNACLE</b>	240	2400	725	1000	110	1200

## Chapter 6

## The Wildfowling Warden

### 6.1 Warden's duty

Wardening duties continue to include monitoring wildfowling activity, at least twice weekly bird counts, assisting with WeBS counts, monitoring bait digging activity, and recording other disturbance on the reserve. The monitoring of wildfowling activity included locations, numbers of shots fired, birds retrieved and time spent on the reserve. These duties were carried out in addition to routine work, such as checking permits, providing advice and information to wildfowlers, and briefing new wildfowling visitors to the reserve. As the warden is on the reserve the role involves dealing with the public and educating them not only about wildfowling but the general interest of the site for nature conservation. Added to the Covid issues throughout the season Colin has also been involved in Avian influenza monitoring as well.

### 6.2 The warden's routine for policing wildfowling

The warden's routine involved checking wildfowl and permits and monitoring activity at Beal, Fenham Mill and Fenham-le-Moor access points. Wildfowlers were also observed from nearby vantage points. Following morning flight, bag numbers were checked. The same routine was repeated for evening flight. The warden also monitored wildfowlers decoying at tide flights from suitable vantage points around the reserve.

During the full moon period the warden followed his regular routine returning to the marsh between 8.30pm and 11.00pm to check permits of 'fowlers remaining on the reserve; the warden had a responsibility to monitor and record incidents and take any appropriate action.

### 6.3 Use of the Reserve by wildfowlers

As in previous seasons September to November were the busiest months for wildfowling, with Fenham-le-Moor and Beal being the most popular. Use had been curtailed considerably due to Covid restrictions and tier level restrictions with many travelling wildfowlers unable to use permits. The loss of Teal bridge due to serviceability dissuaded some shooters to the bottom end of the reserve also. Although wildfowling was allowed to continue with government guidance throughout the pandemic. NE decided to sadly close the scheme for the safety of all involved.

### 6.4 Wildfowling reports

The Wildfowling Warden continued to submit comprehensive monthly reports throughout the duration of the events of the Pandemic and the 2020/21 season. Any incidents and permit checks are logged, plus the bird count data observed within this report. A mid and end of season report is also delivered by the warden at the LWMG meetings.



**Table 9 Number of permits checked and monitoring visits by the warden – 2020/21 season**

	<b>Permit checks Total No.</b>	<b>Monitored visits</b>
<b>September</b>	34	68
<b>October</b>	38	193
<b>November</b>	8	90
<b>December</b>	1	19
<b>January</b>	2	2
<b>February</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>372</b>

The checking of permits remains a vital function of the warden. It allows him to check wildfowlers that are entitled to shoot on the site; make a note of any infringements and highlight any unlawful shooting. In addition to this it allows him to better assist the wildfowler with any queries they have on access and parking. Three access points are covered by the warden throughout the season. The Causeway, Fenham-le-Moor and Fenham Mill. These are the only vehicle routes and parking that can be used to access the shoreline in the shooting zones.

### **6.6 Wildfowling warden’s observations (Collin Teago)**

This has been one of the most demanding seasons I have had since I have taken this job. First thing to hit us was the Corona Virus Covid 19. This had carried on from the end of the last shooting season, with a national lockdown starting in March and lasting for a couple of months before getting eased over the summer and getting reinstated in various forms right through until the end of the season. At the start of September we were open for business and got shooting until the end of October with various health & safety and social distancing measures put in place. November changed to a tier system with wildfowling taking place as an individual sport although this stopped punting as several travellers from Wales and Scotland were restricted.

December saw some more easing of restrictions and normal game shooting remain in place until the early new year when the second full lockdown came back into force. Wildfowling was still allowed however with the ambiguity of “local distances” being used NE and Andrew made the decision to close all wildfowling on the reserve.

The next thing to hit the reserve was Bird flu, arriving in late October early November with birds falling sick and dying in numbers. Bodies were recovered and sent to DEFRA for analysis confirming H5N8 which is not dangerous to humans. Bio security was put in place disinfecting footwear and vehicles as well as signposts put in place.

Wildfowlers were warned and advised to report any suspected cases whilst out on the site. The majority of birds were ok with few reports of sick birds after Christmas.

Next to cover is the influx of over wintering birds which are arriving from September with over 1000 wigeon being counted on the 1<sup>st</sup> with 3000 being here on the last day of the shooting season. By end of October peak numbers were at 24000.

The first Pinkfoot geese arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September peaking at around 12000 at the end of October before dissipating around the country as they often do.

Brent numbers were counted at 750 in September and peaking at 4500. Barnacle geese numbers remained constant and they remained at the South end of the reserve at around 2400.

Teal, Pintail and Mallard numbers have all been recorded using the site all season but have always been influenced by weather

The end of the season saw cold weather and snowfall. Frozen ground for several weeks and had the shooting not be curtailed previously I think there would have been restraint called for.

Scotland called for voluntary restraint due to weather and was within 24 hours of a statutory suspension.

Covid restrictions at the beginning of the season caused great numbers of visitors to the reserve and the island as foreign holidays. People were wandering all over the reserve with horse riding activities increased with people travelling from distance to use the reserve even in frozen conditions. Bait digging has decreased probably due to lack of opportunity to fish due to Covid. There has been an increase in poaching activity which will need to be monitored closely. With the rollout of the vaccination program I hope next season will return to normal.

**Table 10 Peak WeBS counts for Lindisfarne NNR in 2020/2021**

	COUNT	MONTH
Wigeon	26665	OCT
Teal	512	OCT
Mallard	166	SEPT
Greylag	340	OCT
Pink-foot	3500	OCT
Light-bellied Brent	4000	OCT
Pintail	334	JAN
Whooper	49	OCT
Barnacle	1400	OCT

**Andrew Craggs Natural England- LNNR Senior Reserve Manager**

A very challenging season with Covid-19 and an out-break of Avian Influenza.

The WeBS count on the 18<sup>th</sup> October surpassed last seasons 20 year high count of 23000 with 26665, with Fenham Flats accounting for the bulk of the count. Goose counts were also strong with Light-bellied Brent peaking at around 4000 in mid- October and a high peak of 11000 Pinks in October. Both Goswick Sands – Holy Island North Shore and Budle Bay held sizeable grey geese roosts again this season

The large passage of Barnacle geese was not recorded over the NNR this season with around 2500 being the peak count in early October. The numbers of Barnacle staying on the NNR is increasing with between 1000-1500 with us for the season.

Budle Bay remains the stronghold for both Teal and Mallard.

Work to ensure the England Coast Path does not negatively impact the NNR has continued with the NNR involved in the production of Access Guides which details the route of the England Coast Path including the inland route.

Thanks again to Shane, Julia and Collin for their work on the NNR wildfowling scheme during very extraordinary times.

## Chapter 7 LINDISFARNE WILDFOWLING MANAGEMENT GROUP - MEMBERS' VIEWS OF THE SEASON

Northumberland & Durham Wildfowlers Association (John Watson and Eric Bramley)

March 2021

### Northumberland & Durham Wildfowlers Association

#### Annual Report for 2020/2021 Season

2020 has been a very challenging and worrying year, due to Covid-19 and all the restrictions and uncertainty that came with it.

With the start of the season in September 2020, the wildfowling season opened up as usual with the appearance of wigeon and some of our members were able to get some shooting in. Members reported feedback was, that bird numbers were increasing and from the middle of September Pink-footed geese were appearing.

Club members were able to make good use of the wildfowling opportunities particularly when game shoots for pheasant and partridge were closed. With most of the North East in the same tier, there was little restriction on movement and wildfowling continued. Opportunities for wildfowling were good up to Christmas with wigeon staying in the area into November along with increasing numbers of Pink-foot using the Reserve.

After Christmas the country went into National Lockdown and although, wildfowling was still permitted for wildfowlers who were within the limits of distance you were allowed to travel, Natural England, having consulted with BASC, took the decision that, to be fair to all wildfowlers the Reserve was to be closed and all permit holders were informed of this by letter.

So, the 2020-2021 season was effectively finished until hopefully September 2021.

Northumberland and Durham Wildfowlers wish to express their thanks to the Warden, Mr. C.G. Teago for his professionalism and efficiency during this testing season.

## **North East Joint Council of Wildfowling Clubs – (Kenn Ball)**

There is no doubt that this has been a year like no other.

We would like to thank Colin for all his efforts throughout the pandemic in ensuring the scheme worked well, counts were achieved and wildfowling were kept up to speed of all events as they occurred.

## **BASC Wildfowling Officer – Shane Robinson**

### **Season report.**

This has been without doubt the strangest year that I can remember.

Interest in the permit scheme has increased since last season and I was hopeful to see an increase in numbers from the previous season. Sadly the Pandemic and secondary lockdowns restrictions meant that we ended the year on 132 with several cancelled events.

Throw in a good dose of bird flu to top off the season and we are about up to speed!

As we continue to bed in with regards to running the administration of the scheme we find a few more details to hone to make the process easier and more efficient.

The changes to the shooting zone remain the main topics of conversation when I speak to permit holders and wildfowling around the country. My main concern in the North end is safe parking which is an issue in the Beal area as current parking on the Causeway turning circles is not ideal. Tide fighting at the North end is restricted due to car flood risk. There is clearly work to be done in this area, but as this is ultimately a land owner decision I am not sure what this will entail.

I would again like to highlight the work done throughout the season by all the Reserve staff. Andrew has been a great conduit from NE with updates on events on the NNR throughout both the Pandemic and Bird flu.

Colin Teago has once again received several votes of thanks from several travelling wildfowling that have all been assisted by Colin either in person or over the phone. His site knowledge has been invaluable. I would personally like to thank him for all his hard work this season in helping us in our second full season running the scheme as a department. His attention to detail and counts makes the reporting a lot easier to pull together.

## **Lindisfarne wildfowling plastic pick 2021**

Sadly cancelled due to Covid restrictions

## Chapter 8

### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR WILDFOWL WARDENING SCHEME @ LINDISFARNE NNR

Statement of Accounts: September 2020 - February 2021

Income	£		Expenditure	£
Permit sales:			BASC contract	9,930
118@ £69	8,142		Stamp payment	685
7@ £59	483		Mobile Phone	BASC no charge
7@ £38	266		Printing of permits	BASC no charge
5@ comp	0		Printing of annual report	BASC no charge
			Posting of permits	
Subtotal: permits			Vehicle - fuel	<b>1,600</b>
			Vehicle -lease	
			Vehicle - repairs	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,891</b>		<b>Total</b>	
Total expenditure	£12,215			
Less income	£8,891			
Additional contributions by Natural England	<b>£3,324</b>			



