

Lindisfarne NNR Wildfowling Annual Report

2021/2022



CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Permit issue
Chapter 3	Permit usage
Chapter 4	Bag return information
Chapter 5	Wildfowl counts
Chapter 6	The wildfowl warden's report
Chapter 7	Lindisfarne Wildfowl Management Group - members' views of the season
Chapter 8	Statement of accounts for wildfowl wardening scheme

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

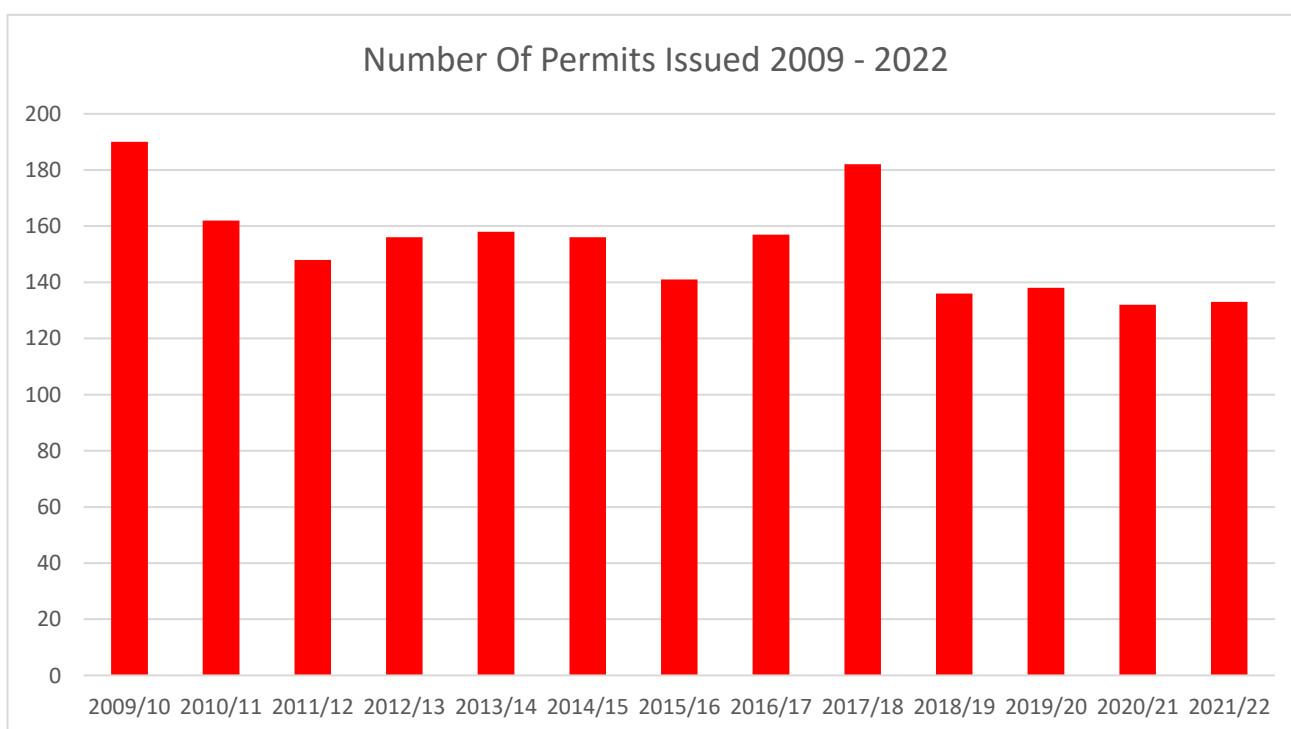
This report represents a comprehensive review of the work undertaken by the Lindisfarne Wildfowling Management Group (LWMG) over the past year including wardening work undertaken by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) under contract to Natural England (NE). This report contains information on the use of the reserve by wildfowlers over the 2021/2022 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 the BASC wildfowling department.

Number of permits issued:

GROUP	ALLOCATION	NO. ISSUED
Northumberland & Durham Wildfowlers' Association (NDWA)	100	(Number issued included in LWMG total below)
Holy Island	40	3
Lindisfarne Wildfowl Management Group (LWMG)	200	110
Punt National	4	4
Punt Holy Island	4	1
Complimentary	10	7
Introductory	8	8
TOTAL	216	133



Number of permits returned:

Season	No. issued	No. returned on time	No. returned late	No. not returned
21/22	133	116	14	2
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

It has been proposed that the two permit holders that did not return their permits will receive a three-year ban. The 14 that were received late will receive a warning letter and any repeated offences will not be looked upon so leniently.

Numbers of permits issued have remained stable and in line with recent figures. Following several unstable years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the loss of shooting access at Beal, we hope the 2022/2023 season will provide a better indication of the 'new normal'.

Example of the 2021/2022 permit - Front Cover

<p>RESTRICTIONS & CONDITIONS</p> <p>You must abide by the current restrictions and conditions supplied with this permit.</p> <p>Your completed bag return must be returned by 7 March 2022 to: BASC South West Office, Unit 1 D/E, Dufford Business Park, Broad Road, Dufford, Devon EX15 2DY or scanned and sent to southwest@basc.org.uk</p> <p>Beal Office: 01289 381 470 Warden: 07803 228 415</p> <p>ENSURE YOU ARE AWARE OF THE CHANGES TO THE SHOOTING ZONE PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST VISIT</p> <p>WHT Stamp 2021/22 Hen Harriers on Swinton Estate by Simon Turvey</p> <p>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.</p> <p>www.wht.org.uk</p>  	<p>NATURAL ENGLAND</p> <p>Lindisfarne Wildfowl Management Group (LWMG) Acting on behalf of Natural England</p>	 <p>WILDFOWL PERMIT COMPLIMENTARY</p> <p>Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve Northumberland</p> <p>PERMIT TO SHOOT 2020/2021 Valid from 1 September 2021 to 20 February 2022 MUST BE CARRIED AT ALL TIMES</p> <p>Signature: _____</p> <p>Permit No.: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Issued by BASC in their capacity as members of the LWMG. Supported by Northumberland and Durham Wildfowling Association, together with Newcastle Wildfowling.</p>
---	---	--

Example of the 2021/2022 permit - Back Cover

Dear Potential Lindisfarne Wildfowling permit holder.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Change of access points and shooting zone area for 2018/19 season.

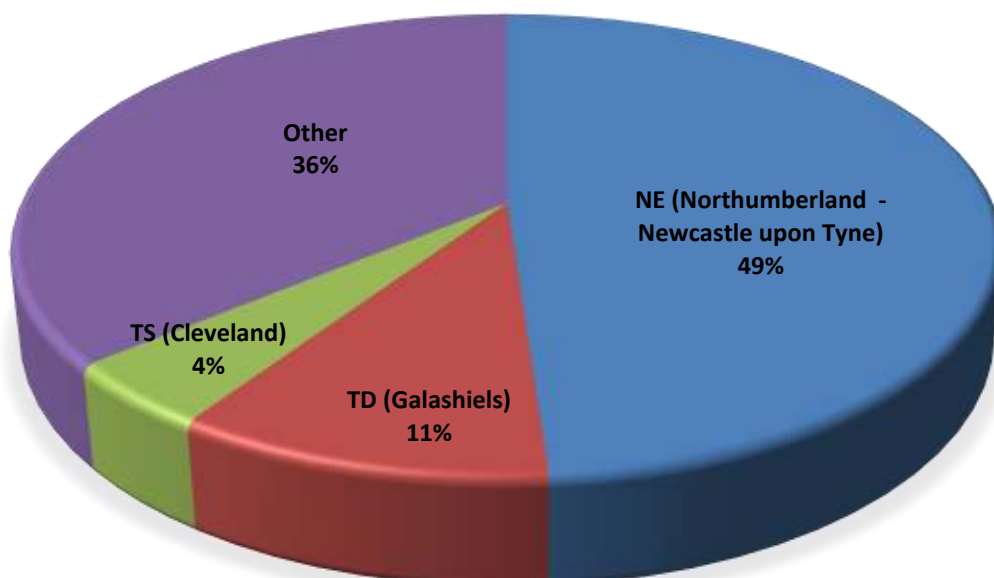
- A section of land previously in the permit scheme has been removed for the 2018/19 season. See area identified in red on the map.
- This area can **NOT** be shot over for the upcoming 2018/19 season or accessed with a firearm (even in a slip).
- Further maps and information will be supplied in the 2018/19 permit packs.
- Permits are available from 1st August 2018



Left: The **no shooting zone** is clearly identified within the 2021/2022 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 2021/2022

PERMITS ISSUES BY POSTCODE 2021/22



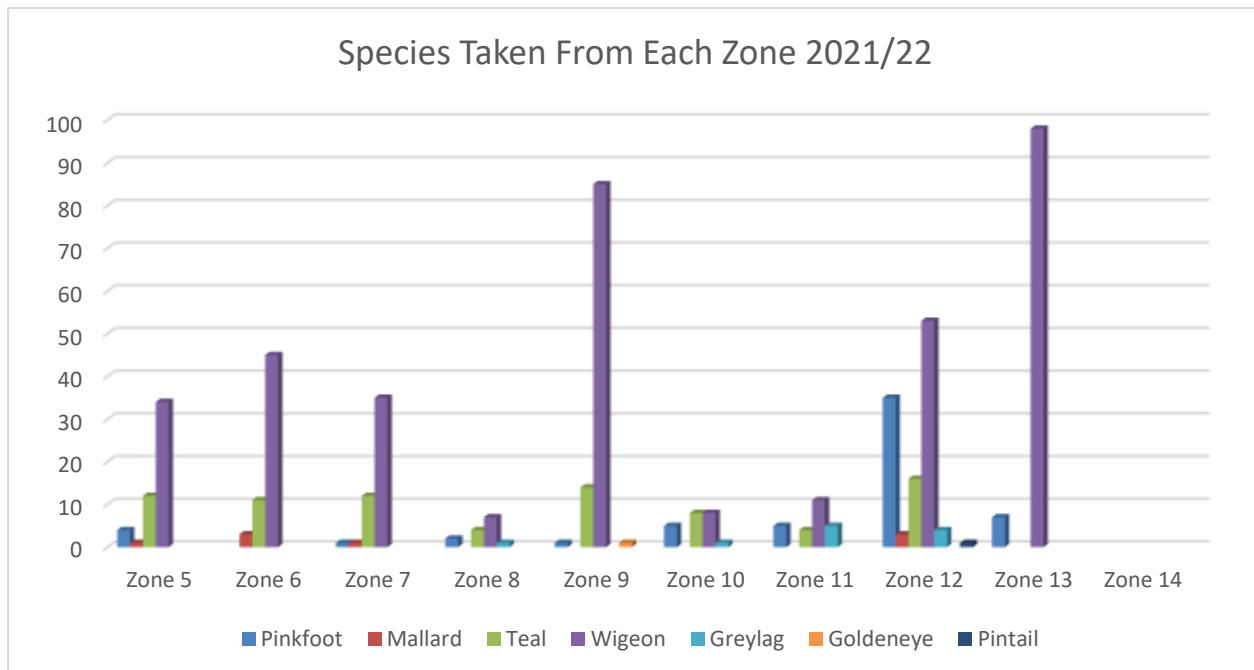
Breakdown of area visits and birds taken:

2021/22 season					2020/21 season				
Zone no.	Visits	Total birds	Avg.	% of total visits	Zone no.	Visits	Total birds	Avg.	% of total visits
5	64	51	0.797	13.28	5	89	80	0.89	18.2
6	83	59	0.711	17.22	6	53	60	1.13	10.8
7	53	49	0.925	11	7	50	53	1.06	10.2
8	18	14	0.778	3.73	8	26	27	1.03	5.3
9	36	101	2.806	7.47	9	46	52	1.13	9.4
10	24	22	0.917	4.98	10	21	18	0.85	4.3
11	27	25	0.926	4.98	11	16	37	2.31	3.2
12	113	112	0.991	23.44	12	125	111	0.8	25.6
13	62	105	1.694	12.86	13	61	51	0.83	12.5
14	2	0	0	0.41	14	0	0	0	0

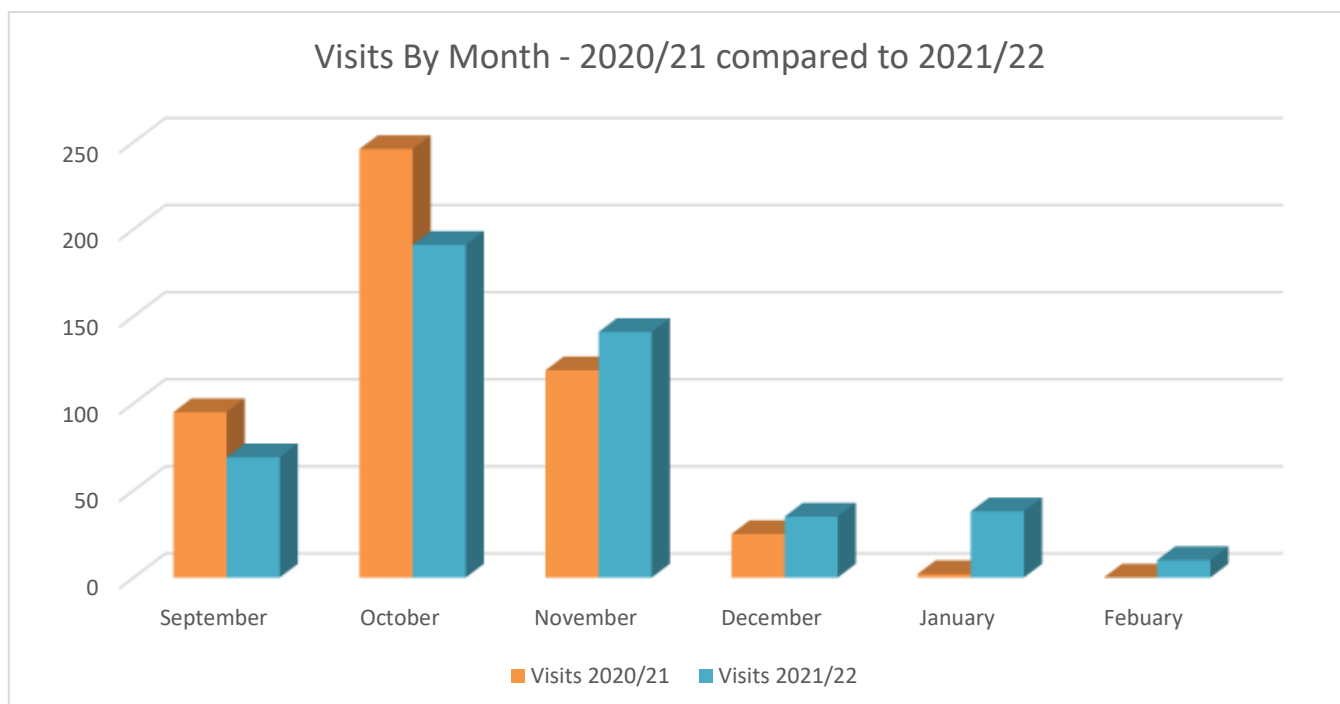
The table shows a breakdown of visits, total birds, average birds per visit and overall visits per zone over the entire National Nature Reserve (NNR) for the past two seasons. This data is key to understanding how the changes in the shooting zone have altered the wildfowlers' use of the site. Now that 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 visits to zones 5/6/7/8/9 as there are good parking options to allow for tide flighting. (i.e., not being forced to leave by an incoming tide due to parking area flooding).

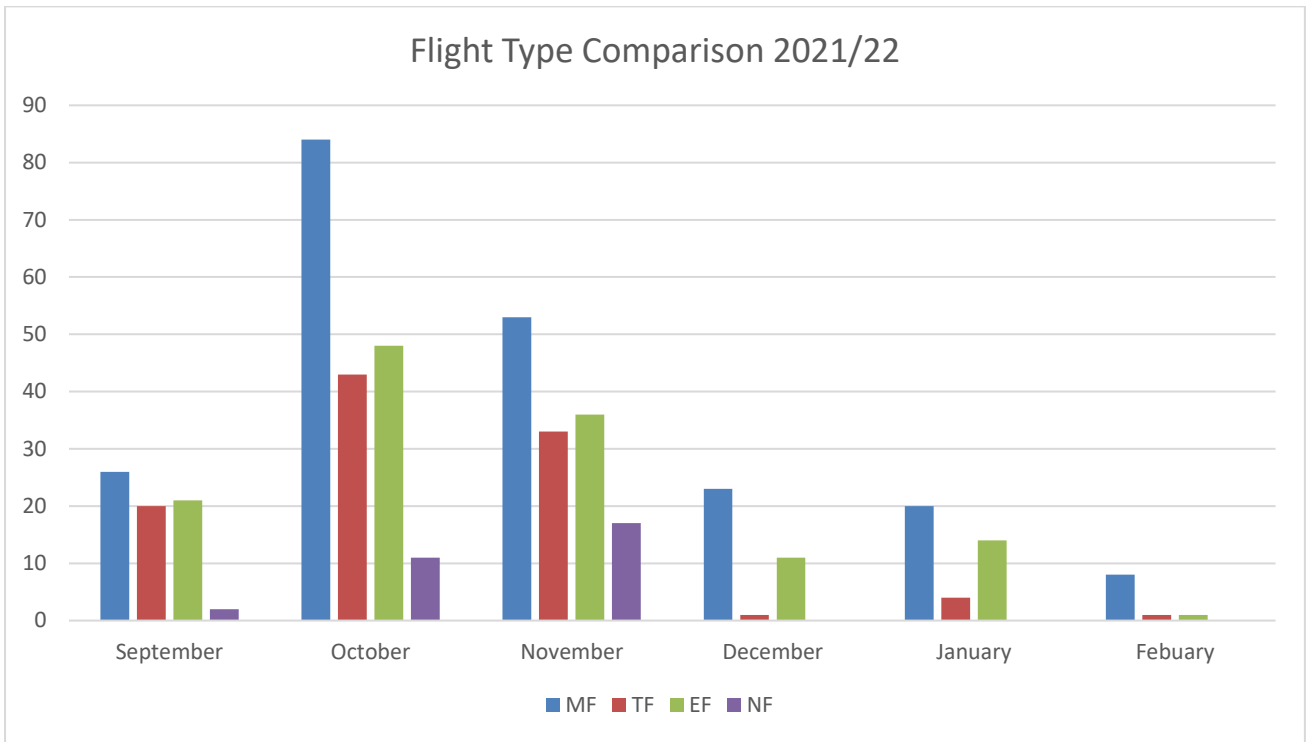


Below shows a breakdown of the species taken in visits from each zone. Zone 13 has been one the most successful for wigeon, with zone 12 one of the most successful for pink feet and greylag. The remaining areas and species were evenly distributed.



One hundred and ninety one permit visits were undertaken in October. The quietest month was February with only 10 visits, although the low February figure will in part be due to the permit scheme being closed early at the request of Natural England following an Avian Influenza outbreak, and some wildfowlers already making the decision themselves not to visit.





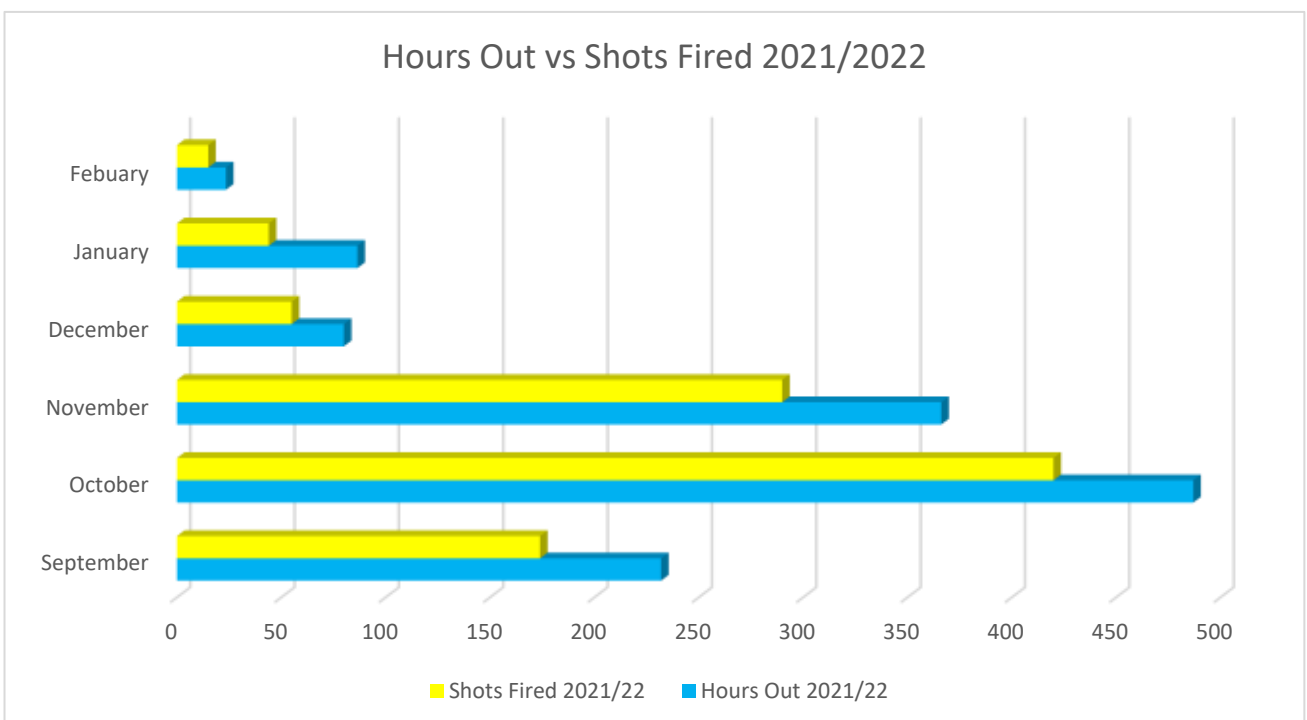
MF Morning flight

TF Tide flight

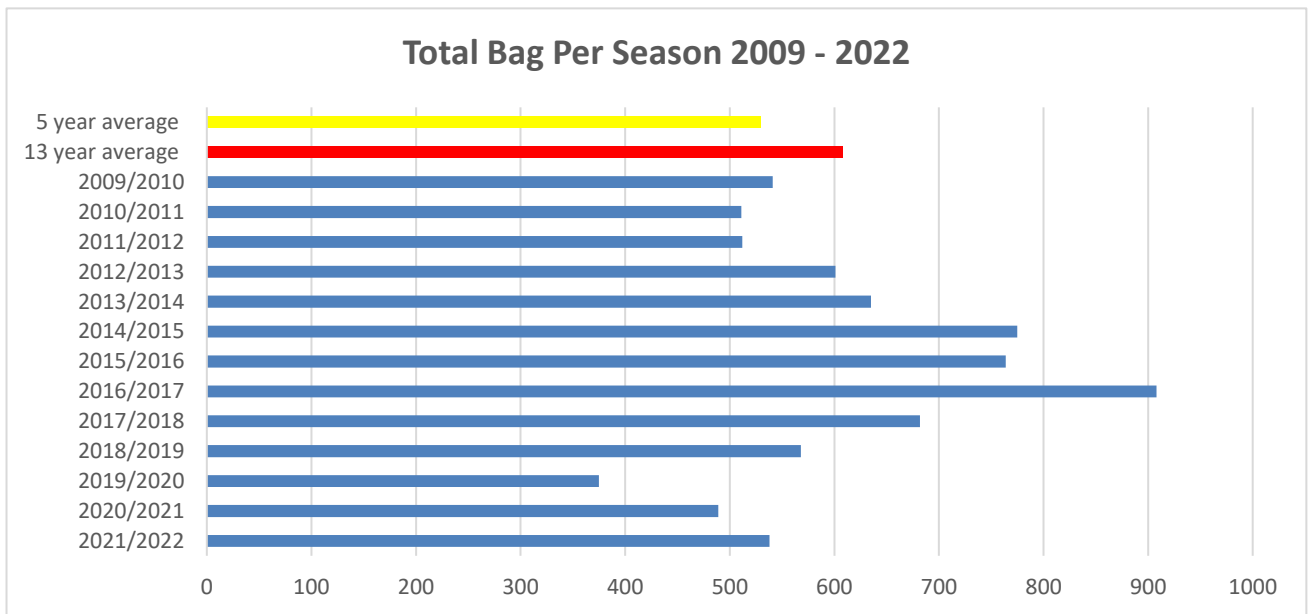
EF Evening flight

NF Night flight

The pattern of flight preference is consistent with other areas around the country. Morning flight tends to be most productive as bird movement often lasts longer and the light is increasing, providing more time for the traveling wildfowler. Whereas at evening flight the light fades, reducing visibility more quickly and making egress off the site and quarry retrieval more difficult.



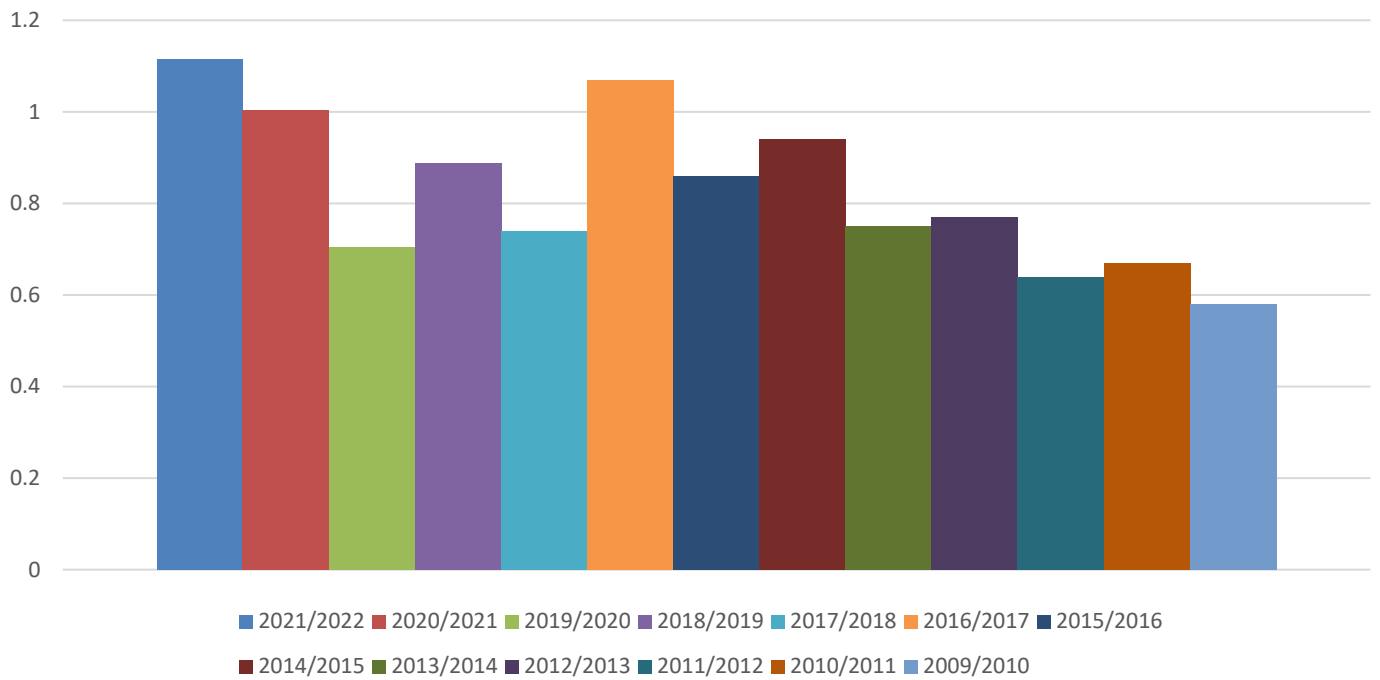
Total Bag Per Season 2009 - 2022



Bag breakdown 2021/22 season

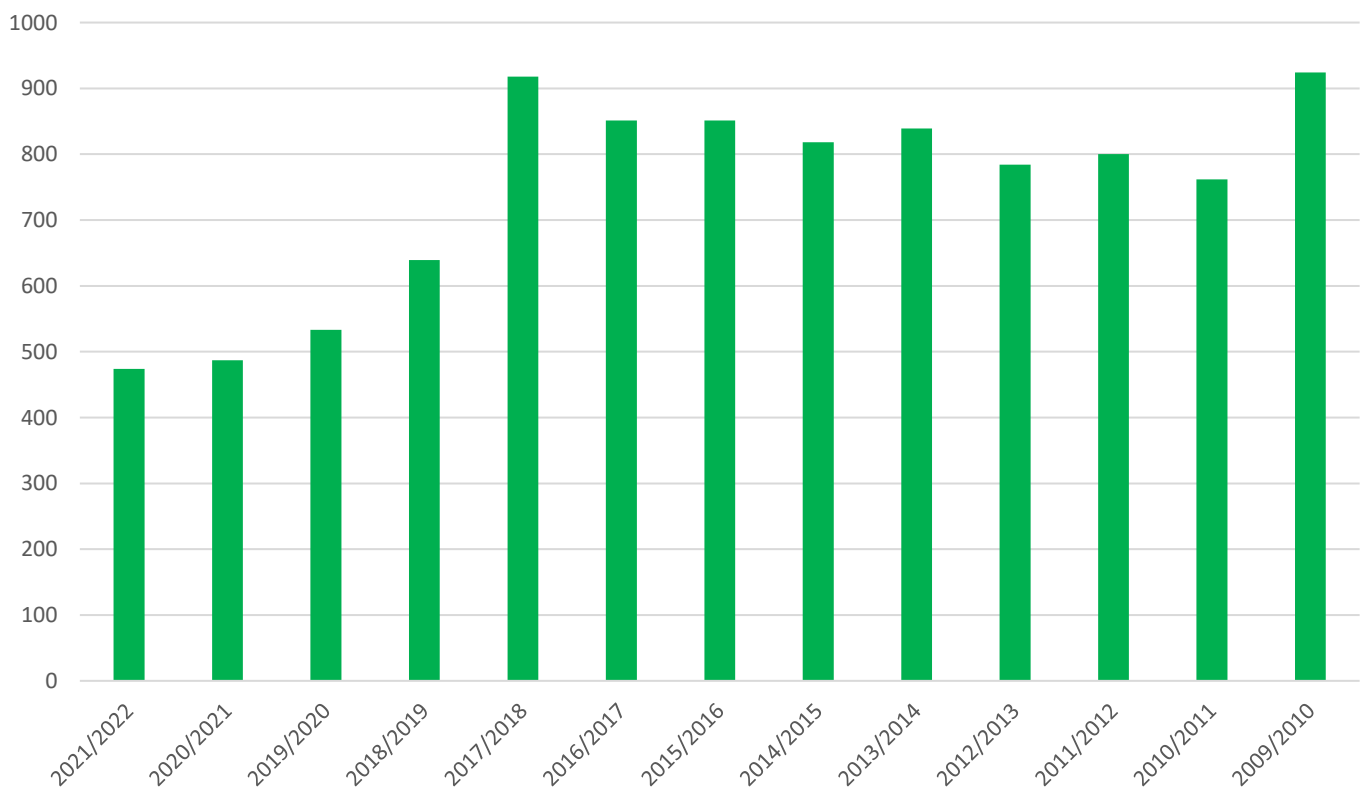
01/09/2021 – 20/02/2022		% of overall bag
Canada goose		
Greylag goose	11	2.04
Pink-footed goose	60	11.15
White-fronted goose		
Coot		
Gadwall		
Goldeneye	1	0.19
Mallard	8	1.49
Moorhen		
Pintail	1	0.19
Pochard		
Ruddy duck		
Scaup		
Shoveller		
Teal	81	15.06
Tufted duck		
Wigeon	376	69.89
Common snipe		
Golden plover		
Jack snipe		
Woodcock		
Total Birds	538	
Total Visits	482	
Individual Visitors	92	
Visits Without Quarry	278	
Average Quarry Per Visit	1.116	
Visits per km2 during the wildfowling season (173 days)	0.0846	

Average Quarry Per Visit 2021/22



Although the number of permits issued and ultimately the number of visits are lower than the five-year average, those venturing out are benefiting from better shooting with the best quarry per visit ratio in over 10 years. This could be in part due to only those who are particularly keen and efficient making the effort to get out or it could be a result of a reduction in shooting effort. We will continue to monitor this

Number Of Visits Per Season 2009 - 2022

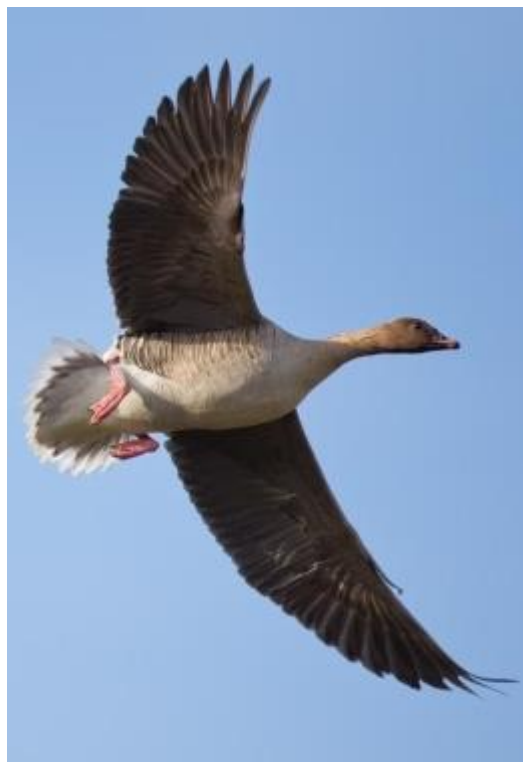


Punt bag composition 2021/2022 season.

Month	No. of visits	Shots	No. of wigeon	Other birds
Sept	0	0	0	0
Oct	4	3	108	0
Nov	3	0	0	0

The punt permit scheme allows a total of eight permits to be issued every year. There are four issued nationally and four to Holy Island residents. Punt returns show five puntsmen took permits - four national and one Holy islander. Only two puntsmen visited Lindisfarne this year.

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 Bag Composition

2021/22...60	11%
2020/21...90	18%
2019/20...97	26%
2018/19...108	16%
2017/18...72	12%

The Pink-footed goose population reported last season has decreased locally by around 10 per cent since the previous season. In last year's report, it was mentioned that Pink-foot sightings had been reported as far South as the Severn Estuary and with Covid reducing shooting through the last season, this will no doubt cause an increase in population numbers for the coming season. Unfortunately, this was not the case this year in Lindisfarne.

This information would suggest why the Pink feet harvested last season is down by a third from the previous year.



Wigeon	Bag Composition
2021/22...376	69%
2020/21...343	70%
2019/20...213	57%
2018/19...377	66%
2017/18...413	60%

Peak Wigeon numbers have again increased from 19,000, recorded in October two years ago, to 23,000 in October last season. This is an increase in Wigeon numbers to the site of around 7,000 since the season of 2018/19 and these figures did not include a population of around 3,500 on Budle Bay.

As mentioned in last year's report, it is very clear that the number of birds harvested each season fluctuate in line with site trend data as expected for both Pink footed geese and Wigeon.

Chapter 5 - WILDFOWL COUNTS

The table below shows wildfowl counts for the 2021/22 season. The wildfowling warden conducted the counts at least twice weekly. The counts concentrated on gaining accurate peak counts for all species but focused on Wigeon and Brent geese.

It was discussed with wildfowling warden Collin Teago 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 a feral population establishing itself. Collin has reported Canada geese numbers in the area have remained stable, with no increase to be worried about. We will continue to monitor the area population.

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

Wildfowl Warden Peak counts of quarry species 2021/2022

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
WIGEON	15,500	23,000	19,000	2,000	1,400	1,200
TEAL	160	160	120	120	260	300
MALLARD	12	31	10	26	20	22
GREYLAG	12	0	120	140	52	200
PINK-FOOTED	1,500	10,000	2,500	2,000	2,000	1,200
PINTAIL	90	90	45	120	210	180

As per the usual trend, October saw the peak migration for wigeon and Pink feet but a return migration peak in February for teal, mallard and pintail.

Wildfowl Warden Peak counts of non-quarry species 2021/2022

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
BRENT	3,300	3,200	2,600	1,600	1,200	900
WHOOPER	0	21	26	0	25	36
BARNACLE	0	2,500	1,250	1,000	1,000	700

October saw the peak counts for brent and barnacle whilst whoopers fluctuated throughout the season.

Peak WeBS counts for Lindisfarne NNR in 2021/2022

	COUNT	MONTH
Wigeon	23,000	OCT
Teal	329	NOV
Mallard	409	JAN
Greylag	7	OCT
Pink-foot	10,000	OCT
Light-bellied Brent	3,500	OCT
Pintail	271	JAN
Whooper	26	NOV
Barnacle	2,720	DEC

Chapter 6 - The Wildfowling Warden

5.1 Warden's duties

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, Collin has also been involved in Avian influenza monitoring as well.

5.2 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. Wildfowling was 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 wildfowling 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 'fowling remaining on the reserve. The warden had a responsibility to monitor and record incidents and take any appropriate action.

5.3 Use of the reserve by wildfowling

As in previous seasons, September to November were the busiest months for wildfowling, with Fenham-le-Moor and Beal being the most popular areas.

5.4 Wildfowling reports

The wildfowling warden continued to submit comprehensive monthly reports throughout the duration of the 2021/22 season. Any incidents and permit checks are logged, plus the bird count data observed within this report. Mid and end of season reports are also delivered by the warden at the LWMG meetings.

Number of permits checked and monitoring visits by the warden – 2021/2022 season

	Permit checks - total no.	Monitored visits
September	20	61
October	38	153
November	21	69
December	3	16
January	2	9
February	0	6
Total	84	308

The checking of permits remains a vital function of the warden. It allows him to check wildfowling 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.

Wildfowling warden's observations (Collin Teago)

The new season started with some of the Covid-19 restrictions still in place, but it did not relate to wildfowling and outdoor activities. We thought we might have another lockdown in October due to the new Omicron variant but the roll-out of vaccines halted all of this thankfully. Sporting activities and pop concerts were not hampered by the restrictions.

Birds turned up in their usual numbers with October seeing the peak counts as expected, with wigeon and brents arriving on September 1st (wigeon 800, brent 700). Wigeon peaked at 23,000 that I have recorded on the 12th October along with 3,300 brent lasting for a good period of time. We still have 1,000 wigeon here and 800 brents at the end of the season.

Pink feet turned up on the 24th September with around 1,500 recorded by me. This is around a week later than previous seasons, but this is most likely due to wind and other effects. Peaking with me in October with 10,000 pinks, still then here at the end of the season. Barnacles did not put in an appearance until October with 2,500 being my biggest count. We did not see the huge skeins of barnacles heading for the Solway as we have done so in the past. The birds that I have seen seem to be our wintering flock that stays down Ross/Elwick and the Budle Bay area.

Teal have only been seen by me in big numbers when the weather has turned a bit colder, but good numbers have been recorded at Budle bay with 200 plus. Two hundred plus teal have been using the rocket field on Holy Island but I have not seen the numbers as I have done so in previous years, even with the new water management system that Natural England (NE) has installed here. Pintail have been recorded by me in the hundreds but not in the numbers recorded in previous seasons. Mallard are still only seen in very low numbers. A good number of whooper swans have been seen by me at the end of the season. Most likely these birds are thinking of heading north.

Global climate change seems to be having quite an effect on the weather. We have had very little rain this season. Only a few days of frost and it was not really for any length of time. Going from freezing one day to plus 10 degrees the next. What we have had this season is gales from every direction with Storm Arwen in November from the north doing a lot of damage. Particularly to the causeway and property around and about the area, and thousands of trees down. This will take a long period of time to sort out. Bird flu is still with us this season. To begin with only the odd bird was being picked up along the shore. Geese seem to have been hit the hardest. Numbers of pink feet and barnacles have been picked up in the Budle Bay area.

Barnacles on the Solway have been hard hit with thousands of dead birds found in the fields. The barnacles here have fared a lot better. Maybe they have not had much mixing with the other birds in that area. The hardest hit birds from bird flu have been on the farm on Holy Island where they have been diagnosed and all the flock has been destroyed. Turkeys at Fenham-le-Moor fare very well and have fattened up for Christmas.

Visitor management is an ongoing subject with large numbers of people here, even on cold winter's days. Farms along the shore have been getting permission to put in campsites. This needs to be monitored, particularly if this going into the shooting season.

Lindisfarne wildfowlers plastic pick 2021/2022

Sadly, the litter pick was cancelled due to the Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak.

Chapter 7 - Lindisfarne Wildfowling Management Group - members' views of the season 2021/2022

Andrew Craggs - Natural England LNNR senior reserve manager

The cloud of Avian Influenza was with us again with dozens of dead birds recorded.

Strong counts of Wigeon (23,000), Pink-footed goose (10,000) and Light-bellied Brent (3,500) were recorded in mid-October.

A peak of 2,720 Barnacle was recorded on the 19th December.

Pinks utilized roosting sites at Goswick and Budle Bay.

This was the last season with Collin Teago as Wildfowling Warden - his passion and experience will be missed.

Northumberland & Durham Wildfowlers' Association – Maureen & Eric Bramley

Following on from what has been a very challenging and worrying time due to Covid-19 and all the restrictions and uncertainty that came with it, the new season started well.

With the start of the season in September 2021, 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 feet geese were appearing.

Club members were able to make good use of the wildfowling opportunities up to Christmas, with wigeon staying in the area into November along with increasing numbers of Pink feet using the reserve.

After Christmas, into 2022, an outbreak of Avian Flu on Holy Island saw the shooting curtailed once again. So, wildfowlers can only look forward and hope that the 2022/2023 season will be better.

Northumberland and Durham Wildfowlers wish to express their thanks to the warden, Mr Collin Teago, for his professionalism and efficiency during this testing season. We hope that in the future he has a peaceful retirement and will be able to have more opportunities to shoot.

Northeast Joint Council of Wildfowling Clubs – Kenn Ball

Here we are at the start of a new season. Before we mention anything else I feel we should again thank Collin Teago for his unstinting service over the many years, also I hope he will continue to have some input to the reserve and its continued success.

With the above borne in mind I feel we should also welcome Chris Wright, BASC's new wildfowling officer and Lindisfarne liaison officer. Last but not least I would like to welcome Shaun McWilliams as our new warden, many will know Shaun already and we wish him every success. Please support him in every way as he settles in.

Last season was a decent one, bird numbers were sustainable, bag numbers acceptable given the number of visits. The big issue last season and this, being bird flu, please remain vigilant and keep up to date with any changes to rules and regulations and report any suspected cases of bird flu to Shaun or the Natural England office.

I hope everyone has an enjoyable and successful season.

Best regards Kenn Ball, NEJC.

BASC Wildfowling Department – James Green

BASC's wildfowling department has been without a wildfowling officer for nearly a year and as such the scheme did not receive the attention it required. With the recruitment of a new wildfowling officer, Chris Wright, and a new Lindisfarne wildfowling warden, Shaun McWilliams, we will be better equipped to continue the scheme's development from the 2022/23 season.

We are delighted with the proactive working relationship that continues to be fostered between BASC, Natural England and the respective wildfowling clubs and individual permit holders.

We all look forward to building on the work already done to cement the scheme's position as a North East coast wildfowling centre of excellence.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR WILDFOWL WARDENING SCHEME

**WILDFOWL WARDEN - LINDISFARNE NNR - September 2021 - February
2022**

Income	£		Expenditure	£
Permit sales:			BASC contract	9,930
111@ £69	7,522		Stamp payment	660
7@ £59	413		Mobile Phone	BASC no charge
8@ £38	266		Printing of permits	BASC no charge
7@ comp	0		Printing of annual report	BASC no charge
Subtotal: permits			Vehicle - fuel	NE no charge
			Vehicle - lease	NE no charge
			Vehicle - repairs	NE no charge
Total	8,201		Total	10,590
Total expenditure	10,590			
Less income	8,201			
Additional contributions by Natural England	2,389			

2022/23 SEASON – PROPOSED CHANGES

Both Natural England (NE) and BASC are happy to continue with the scheme broadly in its current format for the 2022/23 wildfowling season with only minor adjustments.

Detailed as follows:

1. Permit fee increases.

- a. NE proposes a £3 increase
- b. BASC proposes administration cost to cover printing and posting at £3.
- c. Creating an increase of £6 across all full permit types.

2. Introductory permits.

- a. Introductory permits to be developed to increase value and provide greater confidence in permit holder abilities and knowledge.
- b. This will come at no additional cost to BASC or NE.
- c. Increasing permit cost from £38 to £75. This will allow:
 - i. Guide expenses to be covered.
 - ii. BASC's wildfowling officer to facilitate an online training session.
 - iii. Wildfowling warden to provide local assistance.

3. New permit introduction fee.

- a. Increase permit fee by £15 to provide:
 - i. BASC wildfowling officer to facilitate an online training session.
 - ii. Wildfowling warden to provide local assistance.
 - iii. Until the above two points have been actioned, the permit holder is not entitled to visit the reserve.

4. Lindisfarne Wildfowling Warden role expansion.

- a. With the retirement of Collin Teago, Lindisfarne Wildfowling Warden for 18 years, a replacement has been recruited in the form of Shaun McWilliams. A local wildfowler, conservationist, and keen ornithologist.
- b. Hours increase to allow for assistance with:
 - i. Pre-season permit scheme set-up and administration.
 - ii. Post-season bag return collection, collation, and analysis for creation of the annual report.
 - iii. This allows for greater consistency and streamlines processes.
- c. Additional hours funded by BASC.
- d. Warden responsibilities in regard to new permit holders and introductory permit assistance captured in job specification.