

Shooting:

The Facts for Journalists



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About BASC

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) is the UK's largest shooting and conservation organisation, representing more than 150,000 members across all forms of sporting shooting.

Recognised by both government and the voluntary sector, BASC serves as a key representative body for the shooting community in the United Kingdom.

The association promotes high standards of sportsmanship, safety, and courtesy, and works to ensure that shooting contributes positively to game and wildlife conservation.

BASC is governed by an elected council and delivers its objectives through a wide range of international, national, and regional programmes. These encompass conservation and land management, scientific research, development of best practice standards, training, press and public relations, and firearms.

Its team of 133 staff is based at BASC's head office and in offices across Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and five English regions.

To find out more about joining BASC and the benefits of membership, visit: basc.org.uk/join-basc

Click below to watch a short film about grouse shooting:

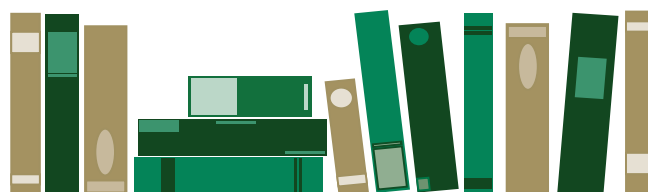


Click here

What is BASC



BASC began in 1908 as WAGBI, The Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland



BASC CODES OF PRACTICE

cover all areas of shooting. Members bringing shooting into disrepute and breaching the standards in the codes can be subject to disciplinary action

Today BASC has a membership of

150,000

BASC is a non-party political organisation, works with all parties and has never been politically partisan



Wildfowling

was a traditional source of protein for coastal communities



£12 million

BASC's turnover is more than



BASC covers all shooting disciplines including game and rough shooting, wildfowling, pest control, pigeon shooting and deer stalking.

BASC is the largest shooting organisation in the UK and one of the largest in Europe



BASC members live in the city, in the countryside and on the coast



WAGBI was founded in Hull by Stanley Duncan, a railway engineer and later a shop keeper

BASC employs 133 staff

across the UK many of them experts in their field



The aim of this guide

BASC's media team works to ensure accurate and balanced coverage of shooting and firearms ownership in the UK. From TV and radio to local newspapers, social media platforms and beyond, we represent both BASC and the wider shooting community. Our work also highlights the positive economic, environmental and social contributions of shooting.

This guide is designed to give journalists quick access to verified facts, clear infographics, helpful links and a selection of short films.

Visit the BASC website for the latest news, policy updates and media contacts. We are a professional and well-resourced team, offering experienced spokespeople for live or pre-recorded interviews across television, radio and digital media throughout the UK.

We recommend regularly checking **basc.org.uk** and following our social channels for the latest updates, including statements and policies on emerging issues.

Media enquiries:

☎ 01244 573 052

✉ media@basc.org.uk



The Value of Shooting

The latest Value of Shooting report, published in 2024, provides a detailed analysis of the economic, environmental and social contribution of shooting in the UK.

Commissioned by a consortium of 24 rural organisations, including BASC, and produced by market research firm Cognisense, the report highlights shooting's vital role in the rural economy and its close links to countryside conservation and public wellbeing.

Key Findings:

Shooting contributes **£3.3 billion** (GVA) to the UK economy each year.

When accounting for supply chain value and contribution in kind (CiK), the sector generates **£9.3 billion** in wider economic activity.

Around **620,000** people are actively involved in shooting-related activities.

Shooting providers and volunteers deliver **500 million** worth of conservation work annually – the equivalent of **26,000** full-time jobs and **14 million** workdays.

As a result of shooting, **7.6 million** hectares of land are actively managed for habitat and conservation.

Three in four participants report that shooting is important to their personal wellbeing, with many citing physical and mental health benefits.

Each year, shooters spend **£4.4 billion** through the UK-based supply chain.

The report reinforces shooting's contribution not only to the economy, but also to environmental stewardship, healthy lifestyles and sustainable food.

Read the full Value of Shooting report and explore the data here:
valueofshooting.co.uk



Click here

**Gross Value Added (GVA): The standard monetary measure of the value of economic activity. Equal to the sum of employment costs plus profits. Equivalent to the value of goods and services produced minus the inputs (raw materials, services, etc.) required to produce them.

***Source: "Reconomics" report <http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research/reconomics>



The Value of Shooting

The **economic**,
environmental
and **social**
impact of shooting
in the UK



Shooting generates

£9.3bn

of wider economic
activity in the
UK economy



Shooters spend

£4.4bn

on their UK-based
supply chain each year



Shooting is worth

£3.3bn

annually to the
UK economy (GVA)

Habitat management
and conservation are
carried out on

7.6m

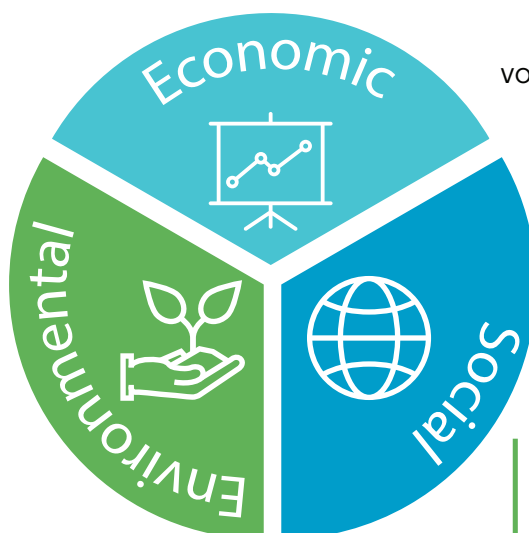
hectares as a result of shooting



620,000



individuals are
actively involved
in shooting-
related activities



Shooting providers and
volunteers carry out conservation
work to the value of

£500m,

equivalent to

26,000

full-time jobs and

14 million

workdays each year



Shooting activities generate the equivalent of

67,000

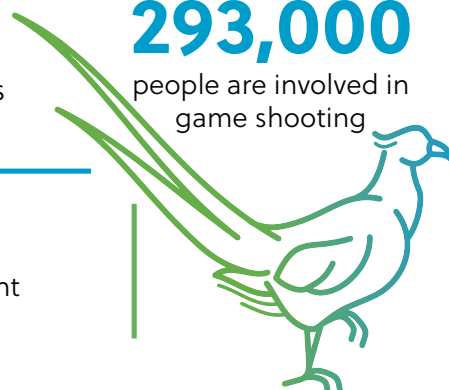
full-time jobs



Half of shooting providers create
or maintain cover for game
and wildlife and/or feed songbirds
over the winter gap

293,000

people are involved in
game shooting



Three out of four

people who take part in shooting say that it is important
to them and their personal wellbeing

The picture across the UK

	Total shooting days	Active shooting participants	Direct GVA	Total economic value of shooting activities, not including voluntary conservation		Value of voluntary conservation activity		Total value of shooting sports activity including conservation	
	(m)		(£m)	(£m)	FTE	(£m)	FTE	(£m)	FTE
England	8,278	439,000	2,900	7,800	129,100	450	23,400	8,250	152,500
Wales	322		60	190	3,000	10	500	200	3,500
Scotland	1,172	68,000	340	760	14,100	20	1,000	780	15,100
Northern Ireland	52	46,000	10	50	700	10	500	60	1,200
UK	9,836	553,000	3,300	8,800	146,700	500	26,000	9,300	172,700

To view the full Value of Shooting report, [click here](#)

To watch a short film on the Value of Shooting, [click below](#)



Click here

Guns



What is a shotgun?

A shotgun can be single or double-barrelled. It fires a charge of small pellets and is mainly used for shooting game birds and pest birds, small mammals and clay targets. Owners must have a police-authorised shotgun certificate in Great Britain or a firearm certificate in Northern Ireland.

Shotguns come in a variety of sizes; classified by the 'bore' or 'gauge'. This is an historical measurement of the diameter of the barrel. Confusingly, smaller bore-sizes have bigger numbers. So the 12 bore, which is the most common size, is actually larger than the 20 bore, which is the second most popular size.

Shotguns fire shot (small pellets) contained in a cartridge. The shot leaves the gun in a cloud formation and spreads out, making it effective against moving targets.

A shotgun certificate (or a firearm certificate in Northern Ireland) is required to buy ammunition and strict age restrictions are in place.



What is a rifle?

Rifles fire bullets, the size of which varies according to the type of rifle and quarry species. Essentially used for target shooting competitions and for shooting mammals up to the size of deer in the UK, they require a police-authorised firearm certificate. There are tight controls on the ownership of rifles and ammunition.

The word rifle refers to the 'rifling' in the barrel, a spiral groove cut into the metal which spins the bullet before it leaves the muzzle, stabilising its flight. The rifle bullet is a solid projectile, as opposed to the cloud or string of shot which comes from a shotgun. Where the relative sizes of shotguns are measured by bore or gauge, the size of a rifle is indicated by its calibre - the diameter of the bullet it fires.

The calibre of a rifle refers to the size of the bullet that it shoots. For example, a .22 rifle fires a bullet that is .22 of an inch in diameter. So unlike shotguns, the bigger the number, the bigger the bullet. But the calibre doesn't necessarily mean that a rifle is 'more powerful'. It is not only the diameter of the bullet but also its weight and speed that are important. So, for instance, the law requires a certain combination of calibre, weight and velocity to ensure a humane kill for deer population management.



What is an air rifle?

A low-powered version does not require a licence in England or Wales. It shoots a small pellet, propelled by compressed air or gas. Airguns are used for target shooting and for shooting small pest species. Air rifles are limited to a kinetic energy level of 12 foot-pounds (ft/lbs) which is about 100 times less powerful than training rifles used by cadets.

More powerful air rifles require a firearm certificate and are subject to the same stringent controls as other rifles. It is not necessary to hold a certificate for an air rifle which can produce a kinetic energy of less than 12ft/lbs - except in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The law makes no distinction between firearms offences committed with an airgun or with more powerful cartridge firing guns.

Airguns in Scotland

Anyone in Scotland who wants to own or possess an airgun must possess an Air Weapon Certificate. The Certificate is administered by Police Scotland and the information supplied by applicants and checks carried out are almost identical to those supplied when completing an application for a firearm certificate. Applicants also need to provide 'good reason' for possession of airguns and this would include target shooting or pest control.

People visiting Scotland with their airgun are required to apply for a visitor permit through Police Scotland. This is not required for shotguns or firearms.

Antiques

The definition of an antique firearm is enshrined in law. If antique guns are still in use, they are treated as modern guns in terms of licensing, storage, etc. If they are not used, but kept as ornaments or as part of a collection, the owner does not require a firearm certificate. Certificates would be required if guns are fired as part of an historical re-enactment, albeit with blank ammunition.

Gun crime

Many types of firearm, including handguns, automatic and most semi-automatic rifles are prohibited under UK law.

Machine guns were banned in 1937. Semi-automatic rifles were banned in 1988 and handguns were banned in 1997.

Pistols

Although most pistols, other than muzzle-loading pistols for target shooting, were banned after the Dunblane shootings, a small number are owned by firearm certificate holders to humanely dispatch severely injured animals. These people tend to be deer managers or pest controllers and their pistols are reduced in capacity to make them unattractive to criminals.

Imitation pistols which only fire blank cartridges are also used to train gundogs. The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 limits their manufacture to those which cannot be readily altered to fire live ammunition and which are brightly coloured to discourage their use in crime.

It is now an offence to be in possession of tools suitable for converting blank firers into firearms with intent to make such conversions.

There is a thriving, sporting interest in revolver and pistol target shooting in Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. It is facilitated through clubs that are authorised by the chief constable, with shooting confined to approved ranges.

Pistol shooting can be undertaken by club members and in certain circumstances by guests. Muzzle-loading under supervision and a strict administrative regime means guests are not required to possess a firearm certificate to participate.



Licensing

The UK has some of the toughest gun laws in the world. People who shoot are some of the most law-abiding in the country – they have to be in order to obtain and keep their certificates.

Guns are an essential tool of the countryside and are used for pest control, game and target shooting purposes as well as Olympic sports.

People who apply for a shotgun or firearm certificate go through a series of stringent checks which may include home visits by the police, background and medical checks.

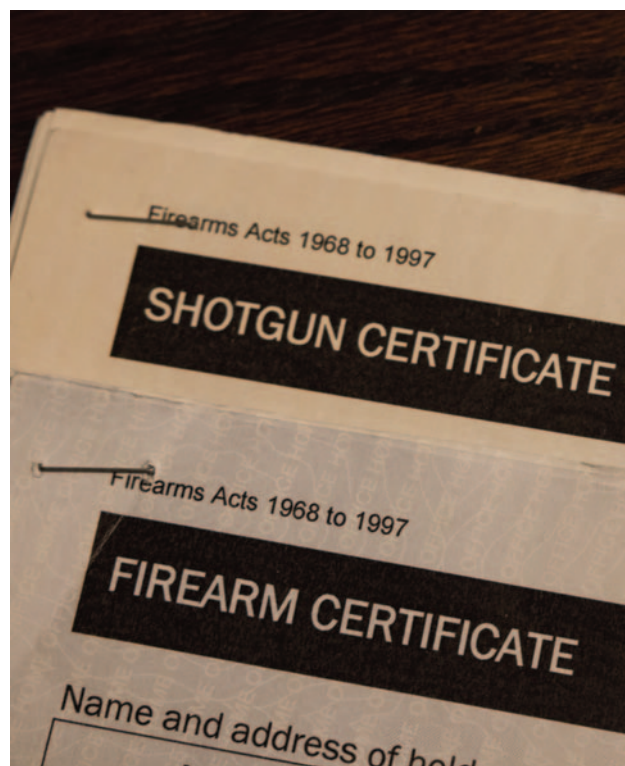
Overall responsibility for granting the application rests with the Chief Constable of the police force area where the applicant lives. The police have wide discretion in considering applications for firearm and shotgun certificates. The Chief Constable must refuse a certificate or withdraw one from anyone he or she thinks is unfit to possess a firearm or who he thinks may be a danger to public safety or the peace.

Shotgun and firearm certificates must be renewed every five years. It is a condition of the certificates that all guns covered by them are stored securely. This normally means a heavy-gauge steel cabinet, bolted to the wall and secured by appropriate locks. Extra levels of home security can also be required.

A firearm is defined as “a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged”. This includes airguns.

The Firearms Acts break guns down into four categories: Section 1 Firearms, Section 2 Shotguns, Section 5 Prohibited Weapons and Uncertificated Firearms such as antiques and low-powered air weapons.

No-one under the age of 18 may purchase a firearm or ammunition of any kind. No-



one under the age of 18 may purchase airguns or airgun pellets.

With only a few specific exceptions, airguns above a set power limit, shotguns and rifles can only be owned and used by someone who has successfully applied to the police for a shotgun or firearm certificate.

The possession of an airgun, shotgun or firearm or any ammunition for them is absolutely prohibited for life for anyone who has been in prison (including youth custody and corrective training) for more than three years.

A five-year ban on possession applies to anyone who has served a prison sentence (including youth custody or corrective training) or been sentenced to a suspended prison sentence for more than three months but less than three years.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) does not apply to applications for certificates. All convictions in the UK and abroad, including motoring offences, must be declared. Certificate holders who are sentenced to imprisonment will have their certificates revoked.



Types of shooting

The main types of lawful shooting in the UK are:

- Grouse shooting
- Clay shooting
- Game shooting
- Wildfowling
- Deer stalking
- Pest and predator control

Clay shooting

Clay shooting is an Olympic sport in its own right and an essential tuition and practice aid for game shooters.

It takes place at club grounds, shooting schools, on private land, at game fairs and a variety of other locations up and down the country all year round.

Clays, or clay pigeons, are small discs, typically made of pitch and limestone, which are launched into the air using a clay 'trap' to provide a range of targets.

For the live quarry shooter, the flight characteristics of many quarry species can be simulated, allowing valuable practice and tuition to take place.

Clay shooting clubs and shooting schools provide one of the best ways for newcomers to shooting to try their hand. People are

able to shoot with expert supervision and coaching without the need for a shotgun certificate or to have their own gun.

Forms of game shooting

Driven

Where a line of people, known as beaters, usually with one or two dogs, will walk through an area, for example an area of woodland or a covert, known as a 'drive'. The birds will run or fly on ahead as the beating line approaches. Drives will be planned so that the birds will take flight at a given point – for example at the edge of a wood. A line of people known as 'Guns' will be positioned so the birds pass overhead at sufficient height and speed to present a safe and challenging shot.

Walked-up/rough shooting

More informal than driven shooting. Usually carried out in smaller groups. 'Guns' and their dogs will walk through an area thought to hold game and shoot as the birds are flushed from cover by their approach.

Dogs are used to locate and flush game and to retrieve shot game. On formal driven days, there will be a team of 'pickers-up' with trained dogs whose only purpose is to collect shot game.



The Glorious Twelfth – A Landmark in the Rural Calendar

The “Glorious Twelfth” – 12 August – marks the start of the red grouse shooting season in Great Britain and is a key date in the rural calendar. For many, it is the most anticipated day of the shooting season and a tradition steeped in heritage, conservation, and community.

Far from being a one-day affair, the Glorious Twelfth is the culmination of year-round work carried out by gamekeepers, land managers, and conservationists. Managing a grouse moor involves carefully balancing habitat management, predator control, and wildfire prevention to support not just grouse, but a broad range of moorland wildlife. The heather-clad uplands where grouse thrive are home to rare birds like curlew and golden plover, all of which benefit from the conservation practices that underpin grouse moor management.

Red grouse are wild, native birds unique to the UK, making their management and

conservation an important part of our national biodiversity. They are not reared or artificially fed, and their populations naturally fluctuate depending on the quality of the habitat and weather conditions in previous seasons. This means shooting days are always carefully planned and sustainable, based on counts of the wild population.

As well as being a symbol of sporting heritage, red grouse is a delicious, healthy, and seasonal source of wild game meat. High in protein and low in fat, it is increasingly featured on restaurant menus and promoted by chefs as a hallmark of the British countryside.

For journalists covering the start of the season, the Glorious Twelfth is a moment to explore not just a sporting tradition, but a story of year-round stewardship, rural livelihoods, and sustainable food.

The Benefits of Sustainable Grouse Shooting

Value to the economy

Almost

£100m

estimated annual value of grouse shooting in England, Wales and Scotland

Conservation of globally and nationally important species

Up to

6 times

more threatened wading birds supported on managed moors

Strengthening local communities and businesses

Grouse shooting in England, Wales and Scotland supports the equivalent of

over 2,500

full time jobs

Breathtaking scenery and wildlife for everyone

90%

of English grouse moors fall within a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Wellbeing and social benefits

At least

40,000

people take part in grouse shooting annually and the average shooting day brings 40 people together

Preservation of the UK's biggest carbon store

Managing heather helps preserve and protect

UK's biggest carbon store in peat

Landscape scale management

Grouse moors have restored

27,000 hectares

of bare peat in the last 20 years

Fresh water sources and reduced flood risk

70%

of the UK's drinking water comes from the uplands

Reduced risk of wildfires through heather management





Gamebird Open Seasons (dates inclusive)

Species	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Isle of Man
Pheasant	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Feb 1	Oct 1 – Jan 31	Oct 1 – Jan 31
Grey Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Protected (ban in force)
Red-legged Partridge	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Feb 1	Sep 1 – Jan 31	Sep 13 – Jan 31
Red Grouse	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Dec 10	Aug 12 – Nov 30	Aug 25 – Oct 31*
Black Grouse	Aug 20 – Dec 10 (Somerset, Devon and New Forest: Sep 1 – Dec 10)	Aug 20 – Dec 10	—	—
Ptarmigan	—	Aug 12 – Dec 10	—	—

In England and Wales gamebirds may not be taken on a Sunday or Christmas Day. In Northern Ireland you cannot take game on a Sunday. In Scotland there are no statutory restrictions on killing game on Sunday or Christmas Day, but it is not customary to do so.

*Currently a voluntary ban on shooting red grouse is in place.



Wildfowling

Wildfowling involves habitat management for the purpose of conservation and the sustainable shooting of ducks, geese and waders from the foreshore on marshes and estuaries around the coast and on some major inland wetland sites. The foreshore is the area below the height of an ordinary spring tide as dictated by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Wildfowling can be dangerous. Tides, weather and terrain can all be deadly if not treated with respect and caution.

Typically, the more extreme the weather, the more favourable conditions are for shooting as the quarry is kept low and on the move.

The peak wildfowling times are the morning and evening flight – when ducks and geese are moving between feeding and roosting grounds. It is vital to be in position before the flight starts. Shooting a morning flight involves crossing the marsh in the pre-dawn

dark and evening flight involves leaving after the light has faded. Given the conditions of weather and light under which wildfowling normally takes place, the ability to correctly identify quarry species is crucial.

Wildfowlers are organised into clubs and associations around the country. Many undertake clean-up and conservation work on the land on which they shoot, which can be leased or owned. The open seasons for ducks and geese (wildfowl) are:

1 September – 20 February

(England, Wales, Scotland) on the foreshore.

1 September – 31 January

NI, England, Wales and Scotland above the high water mark

In addition, it is illegal to shoot wildfowl on Christmas Day in England, Scotland and Wales. It is also illegal to shoot wildfowl on Sundays in Scotland and in some counties in England and Wales.

Deer Stalking

Deer have no natural predators. If deer populations remain unmanaged, they can overpopulate, inbreed and cause considerable damage to farm and timber crops as well as strip woodland and other habitats of flora which can cause serious issues for the deer and other species.

To reduce damage and to ensure that the population remains balanced and healthy, deer stalkers use rifles to cull individual animals as part of a deer population management plan.

Rifles are used and there are specific laws which regulate the calibre and type of ammunition that can be used for each species.

Deer stalkers focus on females to reduce the number of offspring produced. Any old or weak deer will be taken as a priority.

A deer stalker must know their ground and the habits of the deer intimately. A prime consideration is to ensure that there is nothing that will deflect a bullet between the rifle and the target and that there is a safe backstop to any shot taken.

There are six species of deer found in the wild in the British Isles. Red and Roe deer are the only two native species. The others – fallow, sika, muntjac and Chinese water deer – have established themselves after being introduced or escaping from private collections and deer parks.

Five deer species are protected by close seasons related to the breeding cycle. Shooting is permitted between the following dates:

Species and sex	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
RED			
Stags	Aug 1 – April 30	July 1 – Oct 20	Aug 1 – April 30
Hinds	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
SIKA			
Stags	Aug 1 – April 30	July 1 – Oct 20	Aug 1 – April 30
Hinds	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
FALLOW			
Bucks	Aug 1 – April 30	Aug 1 – April 30	Aug 1 – April 30
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – Feb 15	Nov 1 – Mar 31
ROE			
Bucks	April 1 – Oct 31	April 1 – Oct 20	—
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	Oct 21 – March 31	—
CHINESE WATER DEER			
Bucks	Nov 1 – Mar 31	—	—
Does	Nov 1 – Mar 31	—	—
MUNTJAC			
There is no statutory closed season for this species. It is recommended that when culling female muntjac, immature or heavily pregnant does are selected to avoid leaving dependent young.			



Pest and predator control

Pest and predator control is a vital part of game, land and wildlife management in the UK. It is also essential for agriculture, and may be undertaken for other specific reasons such as the protection of public health and air safety. Methods of control are tightly regulated by law.

Mammals

Rabbits will damage growing crops, trees and saplings and their burrows can be a hazard.

The whole of the UK, except the City of London, the Scilly Isles, Skokholm Island, Jura and the Outer Isles is a rabbit clearance area under the Pests Act of 1954. The occupier of any land has an obligation to kill or take rabbits on their land. Where this is not practical they have to take measures, such as installing fencing, to prevent damage being caused. Failure to comply can result in prosecution or the work being done and charged to the occupier.

Shotguns, air rifles and certain rifles, when used correctly, are all effective against rabbits.

One particular technique, which proves successful, is shooting at night using a powerful lamp or night sight to spot rabbits which are feeding out in the open. Ferrets are often used to flush rabbits from their burrows, either to waiting guns or to be caught in nets and dispatched by hand. Traps and snares may also be used.

Foxes

Fox control is essential. The fox is the UK's major predator. It is extremely adaptable and opportunistic and can be found in almost every habitat. It has no significant natural predator. The fox's diet is not specialised and will include almost anything it encounters, from fruit and insects to worms, carrion, eggs, birds and mammals. Any small creature is vulnerable to the fox as farmers, shepherds, gamekeepers, poultry keepers and wildlife reserve managers can testify.

An effective method of controlling foxes is by shooting at night (lamping) with a suitable rifle either by using a powerful lamp or night vision equipment to spot and identify a fox. It is a skilled job, requiring intimate knowledge



of the landscape and the quarry to be able to judge where a fox is likely to be, to positively identify it, to judge whether a shot is safe and to ensure a clean kill.

The use of a shotgun is also an effective method of control. Dogs may be used to flush foxes but there are very specific laws which govern this. Snares can also be an important method of control and are only designed to catch and hold a fox until it can be humanely dispatched.

All methods can be effective in the right circumstances and good control is about selecting the most appropriate one for the specific circumstances.

Bird control and the general licences

All wild birds are protected by law. However there are certain species such as game birds and wildfowl which can be taken in the open season and there are others which can be controlled under certain

circumstances. There are some restrictions on shooting at night and on Sundays.

In England, the government, through Natural England/Defra, issues general licences every year detailing which species may be controlled, for what purposes, how that may be done and by whom. Similar licences are issued by the relevant authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The licences are kept under regular review.

Birds may only be controlled using methods specified in, and for the reasons set out by, the general licences. Control can only be carried out by “authorised persons”.

An authorised person is defined as the owner or occupier of land, or persons authorised by them to carry out pest control.

As well as allowing shooting they can permit the use of cage traps for the capture of certain species.

It is not necessary to prove that a particular bird or flock was causing a problem, nor is it necessary for individuals to hold copies of the general licences, or apply for one. But anyone relying upon the authority of a general licence must comply fully with the relevant terms of it. They are published by the government and copies are available from the issuing authority or can be viewed on their website.

BASC publishes a code of practice on trapping pest birds which can be viewed on the website www.basc.org.uk

The main reasons why the majority of pest bird species are controlled can be broadly divided into two:

- To conserve wild birds.
Pest species such as rooks, crows and magpies will eat eggs and young of other birds.
- To prevent damage to agriculture.
Woodpigeon are the UK's number one agricultural pest, feeding on crops all year round.

Shooting and conservation

Shooting and conservation go hand in hand. In order to have good shooting then you first need to provide good habitat and protection from pests and predators through legal control.

- Shooting providers and volunteers carry out £500 million worth of conservation work, equivalent to 26,000 full-time jobs and 14 million workdays each year.
- Habitat management and conservation are carried out on 7.6 million hectares as a result of shooting.

Source: **The Value of Shooting**



The Green Shoots Mapping and bag recording website has been created by BASC to provide both an excellent online mapping, wildlife recording and shooting diary and a simple way to enable members to assist us to protect and promote shooting and conservation.

Using Green Shoots Mapping helps provide evidence to show government, the media and the public that shooting makes a huge contribution to conservation and a healthy

environment because we use that information to:

- Identify, plan and promote conservation projects that enhance shooting and conservation and contribute to local, national and international conservation goals.
- Support BASC's work for shooting sports and species and habitat conservation.
- Demonstrate that shooting is a positive force for conservation and is sustainable.



[Click here](#)

Young people and guns

Sporting shooting teaches young people safety, discipline and responsibility.

The law allows controlled gradual supervised access to firearms.

Young people who wish to apply for a shotgun certificate can do so at any age but they will go through the same police checks as an adult.

Even with a certificate they cannot buy a gun or ammunition until they are 18 so the law allows a gradual introduction to shooting under supervision.

A shotgun certificate is just a piece of paper which allows a young person to shoot under supervision.

BASC works hard to encourage young people into our sport, for example through our **Young Shots programme**. Teaching young people about guns removes the myths.

For many children growing up in families where shooting is a part of life, acquiring a shotgun certificate is part of training in shooting safely which emphasises responsibility and self-discipline.

Some of these young people are learning to shoot so they can represent their country in the Olympics and other competitions.

On the subject of young people and shotgun certificates, BASC supports the current expert opinion. The Home Office, in guidance on firearms law, has said: "It is in the interests of safety that a young person who is to handle firearms should be properly taught at a relatively early age."



BASC to School

BASC to School is a wide-ranging initiative that provides tens-of-thousands of children and young people with the opportunity to learn about the countryside, land management and the importance of shooting to rural life and conservation through a range of educational events across the country.

We work in partnership with schools, colleges, charities and other learning providers, as well as farmers, agricultural societies, land managers, moorland groups and emergency services to help young people develop an affinity with our countryside and those who manage it. Fifty thousand school children from across the UK engaged with our BASC to School programme in 2024.

This achievement takes BASC's total engagement since 2021 to an impressive 127,261 schoolchildren and young people. The landmark highlights the programme's growing profile as an educational tool for shooting and conservation.



[Click here](#)

Game as food

Game meat is good for you, it's truly seasonal, superbly versatile and rich in flavour.

From a health-giving perspective, venison is an excellent source of Omega-3 fatty acids and contains half the saturated fat of beef. It's also lower in calories, cholesterol, salt, and higher in protein.

Like wild deer, gamebirds enjoy a varied, foraged diet and plenty of exercise. As a result, pheasant, partridge and pigeon are all lower in fat, and offer more protein, iron, zinc and selenium than chicken.

For more information, visit the website of BASC's consumer brand, Eat Game.



[Click here](#)

Women in Shooting

BASC's Women in Shooting initiative is about much more than a name. It's a commitment to creating meaningful, practical opportunities for women across shooting sports and countryside activities. Whether picking up a gun for the first time or bringing years of experience, participants benefit from taster days, training sessions and networking events that offer support, encouragement and a strong sense of community.

Many women who attend a BASC taster day go on to become regular Guns and passionate advocates for the sport. Others progress into professional roles as instructors, competitors or gamekeepers, showcasing the depth and diversity of the shooting community.

Women also help lead BASC itself. They make up 50 per cent of our staff, including deputy CEO Caroline Bedell, and hold key positions on our Council. Our vice-chair, Claire Sadler, is a vocal advocate for Women in Shooting, ensuring that representation within the organisation is not only symbolic, but influential.



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Keep in touch

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