



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



About BASC

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) is the largest shooting organisation in Britain and a representative body for sporting shooting and associated conservation.

BASC is a not-for-profit organisation, governed by an elected council. In 2023, its membership was approximately 150,000. Based in Rossett, near Wrexham, the association has 137 staff. BASC is the only shooting organisation in the country with specialist full-time teams covering:

- firearms
- conservation
- land management
- gamekeeping and Gundogs
- deer management
- training and education
- wildfowling
- media and political issues.

There are country centres based in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as five regional offices in England.

BASC's mission is:

- to promote and protect sporting shooting and advocate its conservation role throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- to represent members' interests by providing an effective and unified voice for sustainable shooting sports;
- to benefit the community by providing education, promoting scientific research and advocating best practice in firearms licensing, habitat conservation, and wildlife and game management; and
- to promote the benefits of game as food.

Today, BASC is working as hard as ever to protect and promote shooting. Detailed in the pages of this publication are a number of the key projects, initiatives and activities that have comprised the association's work in 2023.

To keep up to date with BASC's latest activity, see the BASC website, social media, e-newsletters and bi-monthly print magazine or listen to our podcast.

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority ref 311937 as an insurance intermediary.



A proud heritage

The association was born in a small black hut on the banks of the Humber more than a century ago. A group of wildfowlers, concerned at the loss of habitat and other threats to waterfowl, decided to form their own organisation. They were led by Stanley Duncan, a railway engineer and a highly experienced wildfowler and naturalist. In 1908, the Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland (WAGBI) held its first official meeting in Hull.

By 1981, WAGBI boasted a membership of 50,000, had merged with the Gamekeepers' Association, and had a far wider remit than simply representing wildfowlers. To reflect its inclusive role as the voice of shooting, its name was changed to the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC).

BASC not only provides a service to its members but is active in the public and political arenas, defending the interests of shooting. In its century-long history, BASC has many notable achievements:

- BASC has worked with the government to produce codes of practice, promoting the highest standards of animal welfare and firearms ownership. Digital copies can be found on the BASC website.
- When the Protection of Birds Act (1954) introduced protection for all wild birds, the association helped to found more wildfowling clubs throughout the UK to ensure that shooting was carried out responsibly, sustainably and within the law.
- In 2000, BASC produced a biodiversity action plan for all shooting and now works with a wide range of conservation organisations, from county wildlife trusts to government authorities.

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Chairman's report

BASC chairman Eoghan Cameron looks back at another tumultuous year in which the association tackled threats both familiar and unexpected, and bounced back from the difficulties imposed by the pandemic.

The request to compose my annual report tends to herald the end of the game shooting season. While the latter is certainly not something I rejoice in, I do appreciate the challenge of condensing the association's considerable achievements over a whole year down to a couple of pages. And challenge, I'm afraid, is an understatement. I marvel at those who still ask: "What does BASC do?" The question really ought to be: "What does BASC *not* do?" This Annual Review comprehensively demonstrates the association's significant exploits, sheer level of performance and partnership working in 2023. Vapid slogans, empty rhetoric and exaggeration have no place within these pages. These are the hard results and impactful outcomes our members expect.

To give you a flavour of what this means, I have selected some of my personal highlights from 2023.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Act Now Campaign delivered throughout the UK: more than 42,000 responses to the NRW gamebird releasing consultation alone.
- ◆ BASC Wildlife Fund: £116,621 awarded in conservation grants in 2023. Since 2020, the fund has provided £467,000 in grants for conservation projects in the UK and abroad.
- ◆ Agreement secured from government and police to remove sound moderators from firearms licensing.
- ◆ Trophy hunting bill fails, in part thanks to BASC's work with peers.
- ◆ Completed The Value of Shooting survey in 2023; publication planned for 2024.
- ◆ Fighting Fund: BASC issued a successful judicial review claim relating to Defra's decision to change the scope of the GL43 framework.
- ◆ United Utilities: BASC mounted a substantial campaign in response to UU's decision it would no longer renew leases for shooting tenants in the Northwest of England. Result: decision retracted pending an independent review.
- ◆ Submission of consultation response to the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill including submission of amendments and evidence.
- ◆ With partners, launched the British Quality Wild Venison (BQWV) assurance scheme.
- ◆ A first visit to Marford Mill by HRH The Princess Royal, BASC's new Patron.
- ◆ Successfully lobbied Defra for changes to be made to the nELMS wet grassland option that will allow for the continuation of some level of sustainable shooting.
- ◆ Continued to provide extensive support to Natural England's Hen Harrier Recovery Plan. With 141 chicks fledged, 2023 surpassed the previous year's record of 119.
- ◆ General licences in Northern Ireland: BASC challenged DAERA on changes made to its general licences that permit the killing or taking of pest birds.
- ◆ BASC to School engagement in 2023 exceeded 45,000 – a year-on-year increase of 13,000.
- ◆ Ladies Shooting relaunched as Women in Shooting to modernise the brand and broaden its appeal.
- ◆ The Legacy Funded Scholarship programme received the highest number of applications yet in a single year. Since the programme's launch in 2019, BASC has awarded almost £50,000 in scholarships to students across the country.



In numbers

- More than 1,650 members took part in sustainable ammunition events.
- Engaged more than 280 politicians in the United Kingdom.
- More than 3,957 substantial member enquiries resolved.
- More than 45,000 young people involved in BASC educational engagement.
- More than 850 courses delivered.
- More than 1,260 shotgun lessons delivered at game fairs.
- More than 110 visits to firearms licensing departments and a further 1,500 engagements on behalf of members.
- Major campaigns run for consultations on: gamebird releasing in Wales (42,597 responses), Scottish wildlife management bill (5,289 responses), firearms licensing (est. 50,000 responses), and lead ammunition restrictions (est. 5,000 responses).

In the media

BASC appeared on several primetime television programmes including:

- *Countryfile* (game shooting and avian influenza);
- Channel 4 (Crufts);
- BBC Breakfast News (firearms licensing); and
- Three appearances on GB News (debanking).

BASC was quoted and featured in numerous articles in the national, regional, local and international press. Examples include:

- *Daily Telegraph* (NRW, debanking, GL43, grouse);
- *The Times* (grouse, trophy hunting);
- *The Guardian* (firearms licensing, raptor persecution); and
- *Financial Times* (initial feature and a letter on grouse shooting/conservation).

BASC appeared on national and local radio stations including:

- BBC Radio 5 Live (firearms licensing); and
- BBC Radio 4 *Farming Today* (debanking, NRW, GL43).

So, what will 2024 bring? I have used Everest to illustrate the environment within which BASC operates today. It will very much be the environment we continue to operate in for some time to come. The tests we face may change, some will remain, and others will emerge. Year-round, in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales, BASC's people take these Everests in their stride. It is what BASC exists for, and it is the environment in which we choose to operate.

The front on which we fight for our members is characterised by the diversity and range of battles. Only BASC is equipped to succeed here. Accomplished though they are, distilling a selection of BASC's achievements as I have above scarcely does justice to what sits behind them. Long-term strategic planning, agility, unparalleled expertise, tenacity, a big financial stick, and countless hours of hard work by passionate, driven people – this is what it takes. Above all else though, the loyalty and growth of our membership remain vital to maintaining and developing our capability.

You will never own a more important or more effective piece of shooting kit than BASC membership. In 2024 and beyond, this will be more evident than ever.

Thank you for supporting BASC today and our way of life for generations to come.

EOGHAN CAMERON
Chairman

BASC Council

BASC is governed by an elected council. Any full member of the association may be nominated for a council seat and, if elected, will serve for five years, with a maximum of two terms. Council meets ten times a year; it is the board and strategic decision-making fulcrum of BASC. It is charged with setting strategy and policy, while operational execution is delegated to the chief executive. Ultimate responsibility for the direction and sound running of the association resides with the council.

Details of elections and vacancies are provided in *Shooting and Conservation* – BASC's bi-monthly magazine – and on the BASC website. Results are announced at the AGM.

Oliver McCullough

Elected 2015 –
Northern Ireland seat
(County Down)



Oliver has been a member of BASC/WAGBI for 51 years. He is a keen wildfowler and woodcock shooter. He is a committee member of the Comber Wildfowlers and is also the club's representative on the joint council on Strangford Lough. He has chaired BASC's Executive and Finance Committee and led in the governance review of the association.

Ian Grindy

Elected 2014
National seat (Lancashire)



Ian is a retired estate manager and was a professional gamekeeper for 33 years. He has a wealth of experience working with statutory and non-statutory organisations, and an interest in deer stalking, wildfowling and grouse moor management.

Eoghan Cameron

Chairman
Elected 2017 –
Scotland seat (Angus)



Eoghan lives in rural Angus and is dedicated to protecting and promoting sustainable shooting. He has participated in field sports since childhood. His passions are deer stalking, all forms of driven and walked-up game shooting, and fishing. A BASC member of more than 25 years, he is also chairman of The Scottish Youth & the Countryside Education Trust and formerly chaired Aim to Sustain and the Shoot Liaison Committee.

Professor Ann Mortimer

Elected 2015
National seat (Yorkshire)



Ann enjoys air rifle, shotgun and rifle shooting. She is a member of a ladies-only roving syndicate and a regular deer stalker. As a psychiatrist with extensive experience, she teaches junior doctors and firearms enquiry officers about mental health and firearms issues.

Robin Marshall-Ball

Elected 2016
England seat (Wiltshire)



Robin was a secondary school teacher for 27 years. He has also worked in the food industry and as BASC's conservation officer in south-west England. He is now retired and conducts game cookery demonstrations at events. Robin has written many articles for shooting magazines and has published seven books on shooting-related matters.

Chris Barker

Elected 2021
National Seat (Yorkshire)



Chris is a long-standing BASC member and passionate shooter. He is secretary of the Fenland Wildfowlers and serves on the Hull and East Riding Wildfowlers Association committee. Semi-retired, he lives with his wife and their four dogs on a smallholding in the Yorkshire Wolds where they raise their own rare-breed pork and lamb.

Claire Sadler

Vice chair
Elected 2018 –
National seat (London)



Claire is a keen game shot and deer stalker as well as enjoying clay shooting, air rifles, working her dogs and fishing. She is a passionate advocate of field sports and encourages more women and youngsters into the outdoors. Claire is head of legal for a technology company and has a background in FCA and contentious matters.

Al Gabriel

Elected 2020
National seat (Northumberland)



Al is a molecular biologist with a background in ecology and genetics. He is a keen deer stalker and a freelance writer for shooting magazines. Al has a strong interest in promoting diversity in shooting and public understanding of country sports.

John Furbisher

Elected 2023
National seat (Yorkshire)



John was a *Sunday Times* staff reporter, *Yorkshire Post* deputy editor, editor of two regional daily newspapers and worked in Brussels as head of media for British MEPs before forming his own consultancy. He enjoys a round of clays, driven and walked-up game days, shooting for gundog trials and the occasional stalking trip. He also undertakes pest control duties on local farms.

John Harlow

Elected 2022
National seat (Lincolnshire)



A passionate wildfowler, John also picks up on his local farm shoot and loves training his dogs. Now retired, he served in the Metropolitan Police for 30 years, progressing to the rank of chief inspector for the last ten years of his career.

Richard Garner Williams

Elected 2022
Wales seat (Cardiff)



Richard's shooting interests mainly centre around deer management, with a bit of walked-up game shooting thrown into the mix. He is also a committed angler and passionate about defending shooting sports from those who wish to see an end to them.

Ian Coghill

(Co-opted in 2018)



Ian is a former chairman of the GWCT and a lifelong conservationist and sportsman. He believes profoundly – based on direct experience and scientific research – that properly conducted field sports are not just a force for good in the countryside, but essential. Without all or any of them the British countryside would be immeasurably poorer in every respect.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Lord Geoffrey Dear



As a retired police officer, a former chief constable and a member of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Lord Dear has been a BASC member for 39 years. He was elected president of the association in 2017. He lists country sports as a recreation and is a keen Shot who has previously supported the charitable work of the BASC Wildlife Fund.

Ian Bell



Ian joined the BASC team as chief executive in February 2018. Ian has a lifelong passion for shooting and the conservation benefit it brings. He first joined BASC as a Young Shot. He is committed to fight for our way of life. A former Brigadier in the British Army, he took up the position at BASC at the end of his final deployment as Commander British Forces Germany.

Christopher Graffius



An ex-officio member of BASC Council since 2001, Christopher has worked in politics, media and PR since 1983. Committed to securing all-party support for shooting and balanced media coverage, he has hunted across Europe and the States, stalked deer in Scotland, fowled in Wales and the north west and enjoys shooting game on a syndicate in the Welsh Marches.

Angela Davies



Angela is BASC's executive director of business management, and society secretary. A qualified chartered management accountant with a masters in policy and business management, Angela has over 25 years of financial, strategic, governance and business management experience with 17 years in senior, director and company secretary roles across a variety of sectors.

Peter Clark



Peter Clark joined BASC as Scotland public affairs manager in 2022. He was appointed BASC's Scotland director in 2023. His extensive knowledge of rural affairs and parliamentary procedures places him well to deal with the large number of policy matters that shooting faces. Peter is a keen clay and game shot and a fervent defender of the countryside.

Steve Griffiths



BASC Wales director Steve has a background in farming and land management in Wales. He previously worked for the National Trust and University of Wales as an estate manager. Before joining BASC, Steve was a projects manager and deer liaison officer for the Deer Initiative. He is a keen deer stalker and is passionate about conservation work and protecting Wales' rural landscapes.

Caroline Bedell



Caroline holds a degree in rural land management which led her to qualifying as a rural practice chartered surveyor, managing a mixed portfolio of rural estates. In 2001, Caroline joined the CLA as its regional surveyor, progressing to become its national public access advisor. In 2006, she took on the position of CLA Midlands regional director. In 2018, Caroline joined BASC to lead the conservation team.

Steve Bloomfield



Following a career in gamekeeping and deer management spanning 30 years, Steve joined BASC in 2008 as a regional director. Currently he is BASC's executive director of shooting and operations. Unsurprisingly, other than shooting, fishing and stalking, Steve is never more at home than when carrying out gamekeeping duties on land where he shoots.

Gareth Dockerty



Gareth joined BASC in 2016 as a regional officer in the north-east of England. He was subsequently appointed to a new post as uplands officer, a role close to his heart, having grown up in the North Yorkshire moors. He has recently been appointed as BASC's deputy executive director of shooting and operations.

Tommy Mayne



Tommy has been involved in shooting for 37 years and was employed by BASC as country officer back in 2008, before becoming BASC's director for Northern Ireland in 2010. He is a BASC-accredited shotgun coach and holds both DSC1 and DSC2 qualifications. Tommy is also a Deer Management Qualification (DMQ) assessor and a BASC-approved trainer for a range of courses.

On the front line

In 2023 BASC reacted swiftly and decisively to a number of different developments which could all have been damaging to sustainable shooting. All four of these cases demonstrated BASC's ability to influence decision makers, represent its members and defend shooting.

Gamebird releasing in Wales

In March 2023, BASC called on all shooters to stand up against proposals to ban the release of pheasants and red-legged partridges in Wales.

We launched the Act Now campaign to rally support via emails, social media, the sporting and national press, the gun trade, and via leaflets and posters at events across the UK.

An overwhelming response from more than 42,000 people has put the proposals on hold until at least 2025.

BASC has pledged to take legal proceedings should a decision on the proposals be taken before affected parties are consulted.

Gamebird releasing in England

In May 2023, Defra announced that gamebirds could no longer be released on or near certain European Protected Sites under general licence (GL43) due to the perceived transmission risk of avian influenza. Shoots would have to apply for an individual licence with no guarantee of success.

With preparations for the season already well underway, many were left facing bankruptcy, redundancy, and loss of homes. Keepers also faced a huge welfare problem as gamebirds could neither be legally released nor culled.

BASC challenged Defra's decision by way of judicial review and briefed supportive MPs to speak to ministers and their advisors. We organised MP visits to

affected shoots, provided regular updates via our website and emails, and supported members with individual licence applications and in preparing evidence for the legal challenge.

BASC's groundwork ensured that many affected shoots managed to secure an individual licence so their shooting season could go ahead.

In December 2023, the High Court granted BASC permission to pursue a judicial review. The legal proceedings, as well as further discussions on releasing gamebirds on or near SPAs, are ongoing.

Home Office firearms licensing consultation

In the aftermath of the coroner's inquest into the Plymouth shootings in 2021, the government announced a public consultation into firearms licensing. BASC's sources indicated that the proposals would lead to shotguns being licensed in the same way as rifles.

We directed political effort to persuade government ministers that this was disproportionate and not evidence led. Consequently, the proposals were changed before the public consultation went live in June.

BASC launched another campaign with advice on responding to the consultation and an estimated 50,000 responses were submitted.

The government has yet to respond to the consultation.

United Utilities shooting leases

In July 2023, United Utilities (UU) announced it would not renew any of its shoot leases. This would have a devastating impact on more than 30 shoots, not to mention the environment, local communities and the local economy. BASC wrote to the UU board members asking them to challenge this decision and launched a campaign against it, which received both regional and national media coverage. Our regional teams supported the tenants and helped facilitate stakeholder meetings.

Within days of the campaign launching, UU CEO Louise Beardmore held constructive conversations with BASC, committing to an in-depth independent review. Importantly, while the review was being undertaken, it was decided the status quo would remain for all shoot leases.

By the end of 2023, consultants had been appointed to undertake a comprehensive review of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of each shoot to enable UU to make an informed decision about shooting on its land.

Our work with UU and the shoots is ongoing.

You can read more about the challenges we faced in 2023 on the BASC website.



ACT NOW

Public acceptance and media

BASC's communications team aims to give a voice to shooting that is loud, clear and authoritative. Maintaining focus on our digital output, we are always looking at new ways to deliver our messages to our members and the wider shooting community.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Provide balanced comment in the media, with BASC seen as an authoritative voice for shooting.
- ◆ Communicate effectively, inform the debate, and be prepared to swiftly rebut incorrect or misleading information.
- ◆ Ensure proactive communications are provided to print, broadcast and online media.
- ◆ Ensure the membership is engaged through effective and informative communications across various multi-platform channels.
- ◆ Ensure communication to all stakeholders is undertaken, analysed, interpreted and acted upon.
- ◆ Produce a sector-leading shooting magazine and other publications.

Activity in 2023

BASC led the way in 2023 with its Act Now campaign to challenge the Welsh government proposal to license all gamebird releasing.

As the UK's largest shooting organisation, our media team mobilised rural Britain to respond in vast numbers to a public consultation on an issue we believed would have a detrimental effect on sustainable shooting in Wales.

The campaign was backed by BASC's Fighting Fund and sought to engage everyone involved in game shooting, as well as other rural businesses, in Wales and across the UK, whose income or land

management benefits from sustainable shooting. Natural Resources Wales said it received more than 42,000 responses to its consultation and this huge response to the BASC campaign ensured the shooting community had a voice.

The success of the Act Now campaign highlighted the importance of delivering key messages across all media platforms, using every available tool to ensure all members and the wider shooting community are in the loop.

Although our market-leading *Shooting and Conservation* magazine continues to be the widest-circulation magazine in our sector, BASC has increasingly focused on digital media in the last few years. The shift in emphasis towards social media has been rapid across all sectors and BASC's full-time media team ensures the association is first and best with its social output on the biggest issues in shooting.

We also redeveloped our website in 2023 to make it as user-focused as possible and we continue to create fresh, exciting content for our digital subscription newsletters, blogs and podcasts.

To ensure we use our resources in the most effective manner, BASC has created a dedicated content team to ensure we better plan, co-ordinate and deliver our key messages.

With new challenges to shooting and our way of life seemingly appearing on an almost daily basis, it's critical the BASC media team continues to be on the front foot.

While the digital world is massive, we

have not lost sight of the importance of concentrating on traditional media such as broadcast and print. We have an ever-evolving strategy for media engagement that seeks to place us front and centre whenever journalists want to talk about sustainable shooting and its associated conservation. That's why we featured in the BBC Countryfile programme at the turn of the year, which provided a rousing endorsement of shooting to its six million viewers.

That desire to engage the national media is why BASC led the charge on shooting's behalf after Nigel Farage highlighted the debanking crisis in 2023. We appeared live on GB News and other platforms to explain the devastating effect the banks were having on shooting-related businesses and activities.

BASC was also at the forefront of the national media response when United Utilities (UU) announced last summer that it intended to end all shoot leases on its land. We were quick to slam that decision as short-sighted and a travesty for conservation. We took out a series of adverts in newspapers and digital news outlets covering UU's operating area – and we firmly believe this rapid action forced UU to rethink its initial decision. We continue to work hard to ensure UU is publicly held to account so that shooting receives the best representation.

Throughout 2023, BASC's media output led to coverage across national television outlets, dozens of local radio stations, and national, regional, and local papers.



CASE STUDY

BASC website

BASC's website has gone from strength to strength following an overhaul in 2023. The focus of the site was changed to streamline the user journey, improving critical search functions and making information easier to access.

BASC's website is a one-stop hub for the latest news, views, and information on all aspects of the association's activities and provides easy-to-access links to all our work.

During key campaigns, the website provides dedicated pages that direct members and the wider shooting community to critical information all in one place.

The redesign and the new look of the website was managed in-house by BASC's dedicated web team, which also monitors the day-to-day operation of the main BASC website and other BASC-related sites such as the Code of Good Shooting Practice and Eat Game.

On any given day, BASC's website receives almost 13,000 unique visits. Some pages on key issues can receive in excess of 200,000 views.

Westminster and Whitehall

We work to secure and maintain our strategic objective of all-party political consensus in support of shooting and conservation. That depends on forging strong relationships with politicians and officials and having the opportunity to educate and inform them of the facts.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Maintain cross-party support for shooting and conservation.
- ◆ Promote the interests of shooting in Westminster, Whitehall and in the devolved legislatures.
- ◆ Improve political understanding of the importance of shooting and conservation.
- ◆ Increase parliamentary understanding of BASC's work.

Activity in 2023

The political affairs team achieved a record number of engagements with politicians across the country in 2023. BASC hosted MPs at country shows where they could meet members who are their constituents and learn about BASC's work.

Together with the Angling Trust, we hosted Rural Receptions at the three main party conferences. The Secretary of State for Defra and Labour Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs addressed packed venues and outlined their support for shooting, conservation and BASC. This was the first time for many years that Labour publicly stated its support for "sustainable shooting, in accordance with the law".

The biggest event for us was The Game Fair, where more than 30 MPs attended as BASC guests to experience the event and sit down with us for a discussion. Guests included Labour shadow Defra ministers, Defra ministers and peers.

In 2023, we faced serious political challenges to shooting. This included the crisis caused by the withdrawal of GL43 for releasing gamebirds on, or close to, specially protected areas. The political team co-ordinated lobbying from supportive parliamentarians to the highest levels of government. This helped secure changes to the original plans that allowed many of the affected shoots to release later in the year.

Throughout the year, we continued to hold weekly meetings with MPs, peers, ministers, shadow ministers and civil servants to discuss matters on issues including firearms licensing, game management and conservation.

We worked with the British Shooting Sports Council and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Shooting and Conservation to secure the Government's agreement to remove sound moderators from the firearms licensing system.

The Lords v Commons clay shoot returned during the summer break, with both senior and new parliamentarians taking part. More MPs than ever before tried clay shooting for the first time with BASC at game fairs, local grounds and BASC lobbying events.

Looking ahead

In 2024, there will be elections for Police and Crime Commissioners and a General Election. BASC will be lobbying

candidates from all parties and providing the means for members and others to lobby via our election web pages, which will launch shortly before each election.

The priority afterwards will be to build productive relationships in what is likely to be a major change in our elected representatives. Following these elections, the BASC political affairs team will be busy educating and befriending legislators to promote sustainable shooting and conservation.

For political activity in the devolved legislatures, please see the section on Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Steve Reed, Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs at Labour's 2023 autumn conference in Liverpool.





IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/PA38175_LIST

Training and education

From game shooting, airgunning and wildfowling to deer stalking, clay shooting and pest and predator control, BASC's training and education team engages directly with members to provide advice, put on courses, and write codes of practice. This department also maintains a stable of accredited shotgun coaches who deliver shooting lessons all over the UK.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Set, develop, and maintain standards in all areas of shooting.
- ◆ Work with partner organisations and other BASC teams to provide comprehensive training opportunities, produce codes of practice and monitor and improve standards in shooting and food hygiene.
- ◆ Establish the credentials and improve the standards of our skilled trainers and assessors so the work they do has public credibility.
- ◆ Anticipate and respond to demand from members and other shooters for awards such as Wild Game Meat Hygiene and the Game Shooter Certificate 1.

Activity in 2023

BASC and partner organisations continued to drive promotion of the Code of Good Shooting Practice in 2023 with efforts on social media and at events across the country. BASC is also working with Aim to Sustain to promote standards.

The Deer Initiative's suite of best practice guides for deer stalkers in England and Wales are managed by the sector for the sector. BASC is part of this group, and the guides are available online. A similar suite of guides for deer stalkers is available in Scotland

which is managed by NatureScot.

BASC is one of only two organisations currently delivering wild boar training and is approved by Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) to assess the DMQ wild boar qualification.

BASC ran several coaching lines and airgun lines in 2023, introducing 3,117 people to the sport, many of whom were youngsters.

We delivered 147 courses for 908 people in 2023 covering all aspects of shooting sports.

The BASC Deer Assessment Centre, which administers DMQ qualifications, took 656 DSC1 registrations, 223 DSC2 registrations and 32 registrations for the Wild Boar Certificate in 2023.

We also delivered 22 courses for our commercial services team, mainly for staff managing zoos and wildlife parks.

BASC develops and maintains relevant codes of practice for the shooting sector, as well as best practice guidance which is hosted on our website. These codes and best practice guides are regularly visited by more than 50,000 people a year and are valuable reference documents.

Online assessments for DSC1 and the Wild Boar Certificate now stand at 3,695, with 5,375 people taking the Safe Shot assessment online in 2023.

Looking ahead

We are looking forward to working with the Essex International Jamboree in 2024, the largest of its kind in the UK, where we aim to introduce up to 7,000 youngsters to shotgun shooting.

The team will also be focusing on providing more online self-assessments. New courses will be developed to fill gaps in our portfolio where there is a need to improve standards and a willingness from our members to get involved. We continue to develop, maintain and promote best practice with key partners.

Sustainable ammunition will now become a part of almost all events BASC runs, giving people the opportunity to try alternatives to lead. Indeed, all 12 bore and 20 bore cartridges used at the game fairs will be steel in 2024 as we phase out the use of lead.





CASE STUDY

Business to business training

In 2015, BASC began to receive requests for training from businesses for employees that weren't BASC members. In response to this we delivered five courses through BASC's commercial services during that year. Fast forward to 2023 and we are now delivering 25 plus courses per year to a variety of public, private and third-sector businesses who have sought out training related to BASC's areas of expertise. This includes zoo rifle and shotgun courses, pest control, firearms handling and storage, and firearms law.

BASC has developed a range of suitable courses to meet this demand, providing quality of provision and fitness for purpose. This includes the training, supporting documentation, lesson plans, training materials, assessment criteria and certification. Some of the types of businesses that have benefited are safari parks and zoos, local councils, universities and research teams, facility management and publications companies.

Business owners and managers sought out professional expertise to provide their employees with a wider understanding of firearms, to ensure they fulfil their obligations under current legislation.

Firearms

BASC is the only UK shooting organisation that offers its members access to a full-time, in-house, team of experts able to advise on all aspects of firearms ownership and use. They are also able to provide forensic evidence and expert legal support for members facing court proceedings.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Provide BASC members with the best possible advice, whether legal, technical, or practical, on all aspects of firearms possession and use.
- ◆ Using credible advocacy, attempt to influence those whose decisions could have an impact on the reasonable expectations of members to possess and use firearms for legitimate purposes.

Parliamentarians – encourage effective, evidence-led legislation.

Home Office – promote sensible public policies for the legitimate ownership of firearms.

National Police Chiefs Council – promote consistency of administrative practice in firearms licensing.

Firearms Licensing Units – use direct advocacy to represent members' interests with licensing managers and others.

Activity in 2023

BASC is the only shooting association in the UK which has a dedicated firearms team. In 2023, the team answered more than 8,500 enquiries.

With individual firearms officers firmly embedded into the BASC regional structure, the director and head of firearms deal exclusively with strategic issues which affect the membership, effectively creating a strategic firearms unit.

Detailed briefing papers were routinely

prepared for all parliamentarians. They supported the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and Conservation. Other specifically tailored briefs were prepared on an ad hoc basis to inform individual parliamentarians. These briefs must be correct in law, technically accurate and above all, concise. They are often needed at short notice and BASC prides itself on producing quality briefings to influence and inform politicians.

This is a good example of inter-departmental working within BASC to create a consolidated approach to lobbying for shooting. Topics upon which the Strategic Firearms Unit has briefed politicians include certificate fees, the hostile proposal to extend the licensing regime for Section 2 shotguns to Section 1 firearms, the de-regulation of sound moderators, the extension of certificate life to ten years, and proposals to further regulate knives and machetes – both tools being vital for countryside activities.

The experience and expertise of the BASC firearms team is widely recognised and often sought; for example, BASC's director of firearms sits on the National Crime Agency's Criminal Use of Firearms (Prevent) Board. This gives the opportunity for BASC to make the point to senior police officers that sporting firearms have no link to armed crime. He is also a member of the Home Office reference panel for historic handguns. Additionally, BASC's head of firearms continues to chair the forensic regulator's specialist firearms group.

Looking ahead

Most grant applications for certificates should be processed in 12-16 weeks – that is not an unreasonable timeframe.

A BASC review in 2023 found that of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, only ten (24 per cent) achieved this. Of the remaining forces, sixteen (38 per cent) are taking from 5-12 months to process a grant, with the remainder of forces (38 per cent) taking a year or more. The four worst performing forces (Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, Cumbria and Northamptonshire) are all taking more than two years. This woeful disparity strongly suggests the firearms licensing regime is failing.

In 2024 and beyond, BASC will continue to lobby the government for either a licensing regulator or a service level agreement with financial penalties for failing licensing units to reverse this dismal lack of performance.

Similarly, the campaign for ten-year certificates will be prosecuted with vigour. Extending the certificates would bring universal benefits, particularly by relieving pressure on stretched police licensing departments.

It is now government policy to remove sound moderators from the licensing regime. BASC will continue to press for that to be achieved. The removal of 32 per cent of inert items on firearm certificates will relieve pressure on police firearm licensing teams without adversely affecting public safety.



CASE STUDY

Supporting firearms appeals

Early in 2023, the firearms team was contacted by a Young Shot member aged nine who had been refused a shotgun certificate on the grounds of his age alone. The Firearms Act has no minimum age for the grant of a shotgun certificate and any applicant must be judged according to the statutory test, irrespective of age. In this case, the youngster came from a shooting family, was a member of a clay shooting club and had regular lessons. The youngster was interviewed by the director of firearms and a relevant regional director and both concluded the refusal was unjust.

A petition to the Fighting Fund was made and BASC agreed to support an appeal to the Crown Court. Initially, the chief officer refused to accede to requests for a negotiated settlement. However, after protracted correspondence from BASC and its legal advisors the certificate has been granted. This in turn led to increased contact with the licensing manager and the relevant BASC regional firearms officer, resulting in a strong ongoing professional relationship.

This case demonstrated that BASC's work not only supports individual members, but can also forge lasting relationships with the police departments for the benefit of the wider membership.

Evidence and environmental law

Knowledge of our quarry species and the impacts and benefits of shooting and shooting-related activities is key to shaping policy decisions, laws and regulations that support sustainable shooting.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Build a comprehensive evidence base around our quarry species and the impacts and benefits of shooting and shooting-related activities.
- ◆ Enhance engagement with public and private stakeholders and become respected partners and ‘go to’ experts on all issues related to sustainable shooting.
- ◆ Defend shooting through the provision of legal and scientific expertise in legal challenges and the political discourse.
- ◆ Educate our membership and the general public on our quarry species, sustainable shooting and the impacts and benefits of shooting.

Activity in 2023

The focus of the team at the start of the year was on our internal ecological assessment of our quarry species to develop a sustainable shooting framework. The framework consists of a two-stage assessment to establish firstly whether any of our quarry species require a change in shooting and/or conservation practices, and secondly what this should entail on a case-by-case basis. The framework and the underlying evidence were shared with Defra to inform its review of Schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Spring 2023 was heavily dominated by NRW’s consultation on a proposal to ban gamebird releases throughout Wales and

allow the activity only under a licence. The team submitted a comprehensive consultation response against the proposal, based on scientific and legal analysis of the issue. BASC’s Act Now campaign helped generate more than 42,000 consultation responses, the majority of which were against the proposal. The team continues to engage NRW and the Welsh Government on the issue and is prepared for potential legal action if decisions are taken on a flawed consultation process or evidence base.

Together with our Scottish office, the team has also provided legal and ecological evidence to inform the committee stages of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, which has led to the implementation of amendments that render the bill more reasonable and proportionate.

The work of the evidence and environmental law team in summer 2023 was focused on the judicial review claim BASC submitted against Defra’s decision to carve out Special Protection Areas (SPAs) from GL43 without any notice or appropriate consultation. The team is continuing engagement with Defra to ensure we can improve the situation for this year and shape any potential regulations in the future.

The team has also been working on several surveys, including the new Value of Shooting survey, as well as our citizen science projects, including the wing survey and the duck nest tube project.

Looking ahead

The team’s focus in 2024 will mainly be on important upcoming policy decisions such as the regulations of gamebird releases on or near European protected sites in England and the proposal to adopt such regulations throughout the territory in Wales.

We continue to further implement research, such as a mallard dispersal project, a project to assess the economics of the provision of late season shooting days, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of woodlands on game shoots and a project to analyse potential impacts from the phasing out of certain rodenticides.

Our scientists will continue to encourage members to participate in our citizen science projects that deliver not only practical conservation benefits but also important scientific evidence to fill knowledge gaps.

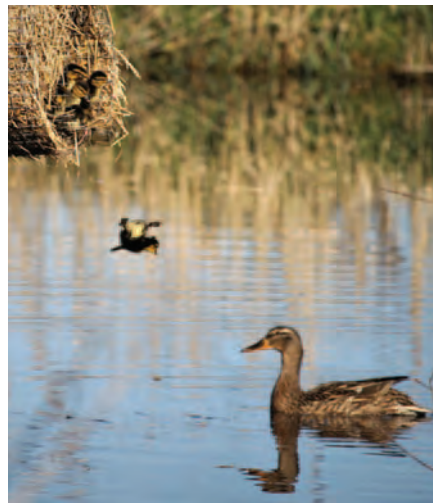


IMAGE: TOP SHOTS PHOTO COMP/ANDREW STOTT



IMAGE: ADOLFE STROCK

Game and wildlife management

The game and wildlife management team specialises in a wide and diverse range of areas, from gamebird rearing, pest and predator control, and shoot management, to cover crops and all aspects of gundog ownership.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Ensure a sustainable future for game shooting and game management.
- ◆ Promote high standards and good game and wildlife conservation practice.
- ◆ Provide guidance on all aspects of game, habitat and shoot management.
- ◆ Work with and advise government agencies on aspects of game shooting and game management.
- ◆ Provide shooters, gundog owners and gamekeepers with professional, full-time representation.
- ◆ Ensure gamekeeping and game shooting activities are treated proportionately within exotic disease planning and disease outbreak management.

Activity in 2023

The team had another busy year ensuring that correct information and support on key topics such as GL43 were provided to members, and that civil servants and politicians were given sound advice and representation in these areas. We also worked with colleagues in our communications team to ensure relevant information was provided to the public via a wide range of media outlets, with the team featuring on mainstream broadcast media such as *Countryfile* and *Farming Today*.

We worked with colleagues to review and, where necessary, respond to a wide range of consultations. These range from those which are immediately obvious as

essential, such as game bird releasing in Wales, to those which are less obvious but also important, such as those relating to the poultry register and public access.

Team members are active on a range of committees and groups working with a range of partners. This includes acting as the gamekeeping sector representative with the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use, which has been very important with imminent changes to the use of these products. Avian influenza continued to be a significant workstream and ensuring that BASC members and the wider game management sector were correctly represented in key stakeholder groups and meetings remained vital.

Natural England's hen harrier recovery work, which BASC is currently supporting with £25,000 annually via the BASC legacy fund, has seen ongoing success in 2023 with 141 chicks fledged. There are now more hen harriers nesting in England than at any point since they were lost as a breeding species around 200 years ago. BASC has a zero-tolerance approach to any bird of prey crime and we are working with sister organisations, other stakeholders and the police to tackle the small minority involved in any such criminal activity.

Our work with the police extends to providing training for officers to increase their understanding of key areas such as lawful pest and predator control, supporting and attending national wildlife and rural crime priority delivery groups, working with the National Wildlife Crime

Unit and, once again, providing funding and support for the national Wildlife & Rural Crime Conference.

High standards and best practice are key to ensuring sustainable game shooting and we have been working across many areas, such as with Aim to Sustain partners on its standards and providing the secretariat to the Code of Good Shooting Practice. We also work to ensure relevant BASC codes of practice and correct advice are provided to members and others.

Looking ahead

The year 2024 is shaping up to be demanding for the team with many workflows carrying over. Gamebird release, whether around protected sites in England (GL43) or in relation to potential licensing across Wales, will continue to feature heavily, as does our work around licensing for the control of pest bird species.

At present the current avian influenza situation looks more positive than it has over recent years, with risk levels declining, but we will continue to monitor and engage as required.

Not only does providing correct information to a wide range of people including politicians, civil servants and the wider public remain a key priority, so does correcting misinformation and misunderstanding.

At the forefront of our approach is the defence and promotion of sustainable shooting and the support of BASC members.



CASE STUDY

BASC at Crufts

Many people may not be aware but gamekeeping has a long and historic connection with Crufts, which is the world's largest dog show. The first dedicated gamekeeper classes were held in 1915. For many years, these classes were organised by the Gamekeeper's Association of the United Kingdom. The Gamekeeper's Association then became part of BASC's predecessor WAGBI in 1975. BASC took on organising the rings in 1990 when asked to do so by the Kennel Club. Over the years, there have been several developments, so while there are still classes just for gamekeepers, there are also those for working gundogs, young handlers, and teams.

In 2023, we saw numbers of entries increase by 20 per cent from the previous year, with a total of 360 entries. The classes received widespread media coverage including Channel 4 where seven-year-old Daisy Upton literally stole the show. It proved once again to be a great event to promote shooting and our community to a wider audience.

Deer and woodland management

The BASC deer team promotes sustainable deer management across the UK by providing advice to members on habitat and species management, developing and supporting best practice, offering deer stalking opportunities and influencing government policy in order to protect shooting.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Provide opportunities for deer stalkers of all abilities to improve their knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Promote the public benefits delivered by deer management, primarily the protection of trees and the provision of venison.
- ◆ Influence the future of deer management across each country.
- ◆ Ensure that best practice is demonstrated by all in the sustainable management of wild deer populations.

Activity in 2023

We continue to try to influence each nation's government policy regarding deer management. In England, we are yet to see the publication of the England Deer Strategy, despite a long and drawn-out consultation and meetings with ministers. Scotland is moving at a faster pace with some new legislation already enacted which has removed close seasons for all male deer, legalised the use of thermal and night vision rifle scopes, and lowered the legal bullet weight to 80 grains. A further consultation will look at extending female open seasons, mandatory testing for everyone who shoots deer in Scotland and additional powers for NatureScot.

In our bid to improve the venison marketplace and get more venison on to the shelves of the larger retailers, we were

instrumental in the launch of a new standard – British Quality Wild Venison (BQWV). It is hoped this quality assurance scheme will open the doors to buyers from supermarkets and public bodies – NHS, schools, prisons, etc. We firmly believe that to increase the demand for venison products we need to make it more accessible to the public. BASC is running a group scheme for BQWV which will enable smaller producers (stalkers) to join the standard.

We have collaborated with the other main deer management training organisations that form Deer Management Qualifications Ltd to develop a range of new courses. A new Deer Management Certificate was launched in 2023 and we should see the first courses run in 2024. We are also working on developing specific training for shooting deer at night to tie in with new licensing requirements and a humane animal dispatch (HAD) course for those acting as HAD volunteers for the police.

Looking ahead

In early 2024, we will launch the BASC register of competent deer stalkers, which will be the culmination of a series of talks with large landowning organisations who want an easier system of sourcing qualified deer managers to operate on their properties. We expect the register to grow over time and we hope to also attract

interest from private landowners. We also intend to use the register to link recently qualified DSC1 holders with experienced deer stalkers so they can continue their deer stalking journey under the watchful eye of a mentor.

Our various stalking schemes continue to be popular with members who are also looking to develop their skills. To that end, we will launch a new scheme in the northern region, which will be based around the Bowland area of Lancashire. The scheme will be open to all members with DSC1 and will provide accompanied stalking for sika.





CASE STUDY

The Deer Initiative Partnership best practice guides

The Deer Initiative Partnership is a group of organisations representing deer management across England and Wales. This partnership is responsible for writing and producing guidance for landowners and deer managers.

In 2023, a decision was made to update its popular series of best practice guides. BASC was tasked with gradually updating and editing the guides and received funding from the Forestry Commission to help complete this work.

These guides have long been a useful tool for deer managers across England and Wales. They cover everything from deer behaviour and the ecology of our six resident deer species, to all relevant deer legislation, firearms usage and the principles and essentials of effective deer management.

The importance of these guides cannot be underestimated, so keeping them current and easily accessible to the deer management community is vital. We are therefore working with a sub-committee of the partnership which includes representatives from all the deer management bodies in England and Wales to ensure that the guides reflect best practice undertaken by practitioners in the field. We also work closely with the Scottish deer best practice guides to ensure there aren't any major disparities between the two sets of guidance.

This project is an excellent example of close collaboration between the shooting sector, conservation organisations and government bodies working together towards a shared goal.

Wildfowl and wetlands

The wildfowl and wetlands team is responsible for providing the 140 affiliated wildfowling clubs around the UK and BASC members alike with support and guidance on all matters relating to wildfowl and wetland management.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Work proactively to ensure a safe future for sustainable wildfowl shooting.
- ◆ Promote high standards and sound moral ethics.
- ◆ Increase participation and highlight the value of wildfowl shooting and its associated conservation work.
- ◆ Work with our affiliated wildfowling clubs and internal/external legal and ecological experts to secure a positive outcome to issues surrounding wildfowling.
- ◆ Provide wildfowl shooters with professional, full-time, national representation.
- ◆ Engage the BASC membership through educational and member events.
- ◆ Upskill BASC staff and external bodies like NE, NRW, NatureScot and other stakeholders.
- ◆ Ensure the continuation of sustainable wildfowling on Crown Estate land through our role on the Joint Group on Wildfowling and Conservation on Tidal Land (JTG).

Activity in 2023

Among the recurring challenges we face, whether that be avian influenza, grappling with disproportionate legislative proposals, or advocating for law reform, the main priority in 2023 was working to deliver on sustainable shooting. This

would enable BASC to formulate species specific recommendations, actions, and changes in the management of our quarry species moving forward. With the immense support of our evidence and environmental law team, along with input from BASC's Wildfowling Liaison Committee (WLC) at every step of the way, our review compiled evidence on all gamebird, wildfowl and pest bird species. It evaluated their conservation status in conjunction with the threats and pressures they currently confront.

This also shed light on the potential influence of shooting activities on population dynamics, as well as the conservation efforts incentivised by shooting practices. Our review not only identified knowledge gaps, which proved to be a hindrance, but also underscored the necessity for enhanced bag records to facilitate a better understanding of the sustainability of harvest. This work has enabled proactive engagement with relevant UK regulators.

By the end of 2023, nearly a year and a half after we started the review, we had a ratified position that places self-regulation at the forefront, with copious amounts of data, and a clear direction in the name of sustainable shooting of wildfowl.

To that end, our new Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice was completed at the end of 2023. Our work, however, is far from being over, so watch this space.

Looking ahead

The wildfowl and wetlands team will continue to provide BASC members and wildfowling clubs with both high-level and operational support and will continue to explore all legal and ecological avenues to help safeguard wildfowling for the long term.

It is important that the wildfowling community is proactive in the defence of our pastime in the collection of data and clearly defining the value of our presence for the land we frequent. We hope the principles associated with our new Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice will be adopted with immediate effect.

The team will continue to work with our affiliated clubs across the UK to improve communication and simplify the consenting processes. We will continue to engage with those responsible for the management of our protected sites to ensure sustainable and responsible wildfowl shooting is understood.

We have a lot of information at our disposal for the foreshore, but it is important that we start to take the same approach to data collection elsewhere. With that in mind, we will be stepping up our efforts to demonstrate sustainability in everything we do.



CASE STUDY

Good news on consenting

As expected, in 2023, the consenting process presented its share of challenges, but it's not all discouraging news. Twenty-three wildfowling clubs were granted a total of 28 consents for the 2023/24 season. This achievement reflects the dedication of our land management and consenting department.

The team successfully facilitated the renewal of eight leases and initiated several consultation processes to secure new shooting leases last year. The Crown Estate remains a major landowner we deal with, and a total of eight management plans were renewed under the Crown Estate JTG lease requirements for wildfowling clubs. This collaborative effort secured more than 150 linear kilometres of wildfowling opportunities in the UK.

Throughout 2023, BASC also organised a series of wildfowling experiences across the UK for key regulators. These outings offered them first-hand exposure to the world of wildfowling, and how we operate. By the end of 2023, a series of workshops, supported by local wildfowling clubs, were also organised for the UK regulators to take place in early 2024.

IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/SIMONBRADFELD

Uplands

On the whole, 2023 was a better year for sustainable grouse shooting than the past few years, with most moors having the opportunity to shoot grouse.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Provide technical support and advocacy.
- ◆ Ensure that upland shooting is resilient to change.
- ◆ Tackle bird of prey crime, while promoting and supporting sustainable raptor populations.
- ◆ Ensure that grouse moors are viewed as open and accessible landscapes for both shooters and non-shooters.

Activity in 2023

Although the weather was less challenging at key moments in the run up to the start of the season, and the sustainable harvest on the moors fared generally better than the previous year, challenges came on different fronts. Perhaps the biggest challenge faced by the uplands community in 2023 came in July, when United Utilities (UU) made the snap decision not to renew shoot leases on its land. Following intervention from BASC and other organisations, UU has now commissioned an independent consultant and has committed to a full review of all shoots, while also securing shoot tenancies during the review process.

Though the issue with shoot tenancies was unforeseen, the uplands team continually works and builds relationships with stakeholders and organisations involved in the management of the uplands, including Natural England, Defra and National Parks. Whether that be

hands-on work or policy making, it is key that all involved see that sustainable shooting in the uplands can and does provide solutions to government priorities such as carbon storage, wildfire mitigation and flood risk management.

Alongside this work in building and maintaining relationships with other organisations, BASC continues to play a key role in both the Yorkshire Dales Bird of Prey Partnership and the North York Moors National Park Upland Group. Stopping bird of prey crimes remains a BASC priority, and as such, BASC, alongside other organisations, has a zero-tolerance stance on any form of bird of prey persecution. Not only does BASC sit on the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) Bird of Prey Crime Priority Delivery Group, but we also support the work of the NWCU at regional level, including delivering wildlife crime training for rural police teams and other organisations.

BASC continues to co-ordinate the Upland Partnership, working alongside key shooting and countryside organisations across England and Scotland. The group shares knowledge and expertise, working towards mutual goals, benefiting from combined strengths and streamlining workflows.

Looking ahead

In 2024, the uplands team and other teams within BASC will be investing significantly



IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/DAVERHEAD

in supporting shoots affected by the UU decision to not renew leases, as well as undertaking a review. We hope this review will allow the shoots to showcase their role in promoting national conservation objectives, as well as the wider benefits to communities, habitats and species.

Once again Let's Learn Moor will be returning to several venues, part-funded by the BASC Legacy Fund and co-ordinated by the regional moorland groups and estates. The events are free to all schools and supported by a wide variety of partners, ranging from emergency services to local shepherds. They give children and teachers a fascinating insight into life on the moors and the wildlife found on them along with a chance to sample wild food.

As always, we will continue to engage local MPs and councillors by bringing them on to the moors to meet the landowners, gamekeepers and communities behind these fantastic habitats, highlighting the work that goes on 365 days a year to preserve them.

CASE STUDY

Hen Harrier Action Plan

In 2013 there were no hen harrier chicks fledged in England, however, fast forward to summer 2023, and 141 hen harrier chicks fledged from 54 nesting attempts in England.

Partnership working under the Defra Hen Harrier Recovery Plan between gamekeepers, Moorland Association members, other moorland stakeholders and Natural England has led to more hen harriers fledging in England than at any point in the last 200 years. The BASC Wildlife Fund (BWF) has underpinned this work through grants totaling £125,000 since 2020.

The grants have assisted many of the options which have supported this record number of fledged chicks, such as licences for diversionary feeding, improved satellite tracking and the exploration of whether brood-managed hen harriers can breed in the wild long-term.

Alongside the BWF grant, a BASC Legacy Fund grant of £75,000 is going towards the southern reintroduction programme, which aims to bring hen harriers back to the south of England.

The brood management and hen harrier monitoring project has been a huge success, working alongside other shooting organisations, grouse moors and partners. This success should be celebrated as proof of the commitment of gamekeepers and landowners, highlighting the habitat and conservation benefits only found on well managed moors.



Conservation and biodiversity

The biodiversity team works across the association with governments and external partners to inspire shooters to conserve the environment through their activities. Our main focus is to ensure that shooting contributes as much as it can to tackle the twin nature and climate crises we face.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Further integrate shooting into international and UK governmental environmental policy development and delivery, especially home country approaches to protect 30 per cent of land and seas by 2030.
- ◆ Ensure agri-environmental schemes across the UK and shooting integrate smoothly to enhance the public benefits achieved from the schemes.
- ◆ Publicise the current environmental value of shooting and work with shoots to build on this further through practical conservation measures.

Activity in 2023

The need for shooters to be consciously managing habitat to improve its ecological health through their shooting management could not be more pressing, both for the planet and in political and public-facing terms. We must demonstrate that we are globally responsible citizens to secure future public acceptance.

Following the second leg of the meeting of the UN convention of biological diversity in December 2022, the UK signed up to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This commits all home countries to address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems (the health and function of our habitats) and to protect 30 per cent of land and seas by 2030.

In 2023, we engaged with each of the home countries on how they will deliver

the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework objectives, ensuring that sustainable use is preserved, and that sustainable shooting is recognised for its benefits and how we can enhance delivery under the framework.

With the launch of the new BASC website in 2023, we created a woodland management resource hub providing accessible habitat advice that will improve the ecological health of the woodland alongside improvements for shooting. We provided advice to avoid and mitigate environmental harm when creating pheasant release pens.

Governments are integrating farming, climate, and biodiversity policies more closely than ever before. We have been more tightly engaged with English and Welsh civil servants and briefed ministers to ensure sustainable shooting is recognised as a driver for farmers to opt into these schemes and select options with greater environmental and societal benefits.

We have had success resolving issues surrounding wet grassland management for breeding and wintering wildfowl. We have worked with civil servants to better specify what 'good practice' looks like and how sustainable shooting works with that, not against it.

Looking ahead

Nature recovery and combating climate change are topline policy drivers for all

home countries and will feature strongly in 2024 election manifestos.

Sustainable shooting, in particular our habitat and species management practices, can deliver many of the objectives under the global biodiversity framework. Therefore, we have aligned our work with the framework and will educate and support members on how they can minimise the risk of environmental damage from our activities and maximise the gains we offer.

Our engagement with home countries on the delivery of protection of 30 per cent of land and sea will continue into 2024 and beyond, with governments setting the qualifying criteria. What is clear is that evidence of long-term management measures will be essential for governments to have confidence in the network. Therefore, BASC specialist teams will be developing habitat management plans for all forms of shooting.





CASE STUDY

The natural capital value of shooting – £1.1 billion per annum

We worked with experts at an environmental economics consultancy eftec, and Strutt & Parker's research team to assess the financial and societal value of the natural environment to people which is delivered by shooting. Being able to represent shooting in these terms is essential if the public, policy makers and politicians are going to treat shooting properly.

Carbon

The management of woodland, wetlands and saltmarsh for shooting is worth £382 million in stored carbon. This is comprised of £179 million from heightened levels of woodland creation and management of habitat, added to £171 million and £32 million of the carbon saved from effective deer and grey squirrel management.

Recreational

Those involved in shooting generate a recreational value of £572 million. But the public gets an additional benefit of £36 million from accessing richer landscapes provided by shooting.

Public health

Shooting saves the NHS and local authority budgets £64 million in avoided physical and mental health costs.

Food and forestry

The game we eat has a value of £44 million and the management of pests and deer prevents damage which saves farmers and foresters £44 million and £12 million respectively.

The BASC Wildlife Fund

The BASC Wildlife Fund (BWF) was launched by BASC's Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, in July 2023 during her visit to BASC's headquarters in Rossett. The Princess Royal unveiled the artwork for the 2023 BWF stamp, titled *Capercaillie in the Cairngorms*, by renowned wildlife artist Simon Trinder. Individual stamps are available to buy on the BWF website, where you can also purchase larger limited-edition prints.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Support key conservation initiatives which demonstrate how shooting actively contributes to conservation efforts and has positive impacts on the natural environment.
- ◆ Fund projects which contribute to the creation and protection of natural habitats, allowing wildfowl, game, and various animal and plant species to flourish.
- ◆ Provide financial backing for the acquisition of land for both shooting and conservation purposes, ensuring the preservation and enhancement of natural environments.
- ◆ Encourage and support BASC members in actively participating in conservation work to contribute to the fund's overall mission of preserving biodiversity and habitats.
- ◆ Invest in scientific research to strengthen the evidence base for the conservation value delivered by shooting, particularly addressing the environmental impact of live quarry shooting.

Through these objectives, we aim to demonstrate the benefits that shooting brings to the natural environment and secure the future of shooting activities in the long term.

The role of the fund

The BWF provides loans for land purchase and grants for conservation projects linked to sustainable shooting in the UK. We are also involved in international projects where these relate to UK migratory species.

The fund is an amalgamation of the former wildlife habitat trusts. Since 2020, a total of £466,621 has been awarded in conservation grants. The BWF supports shoots, clubs, and syndicates in implementing long-term, sustainable change to enhance the natural environment around them, addressing biodiversity loss and habitat degradation.

Looking ahead

If you would like to enquire about a BWF loan or conservation grant, we would love to hear from you. We welcome expressions of interest for loans and small grants (up to the value of £5,000) all year round. The funding round for major grant applications takes place in the summer each year. Please contact us via the website to discuss your project.

If you would like to donate to the BWF, you can do so via our website: baschwildlifefund.co.uk/donate. Your generosity will help to ensure thriving natural habitats for generations to come.





**BASC
Wildlife
Fund**

CASE STUDY

Emergency action for capercaillie

A grant of £52,405 was awarded in 2023 to help restore Scotland's capercaillie population in its last remaining stronghold in the Cairngorms National Park. There are now only 542 capercaillie left in the UK and more than 80 per cent live in the Cairngorms, the lowest recorded number for 30 years. Recent modelling by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) suggests that following this project, capercaillie numbers in the Cairngorms could be 16 per cent higher and the risk of extinction within 50 years would drop by 92 per cent. The BWF grant given to the emergency action for capercaillie project in 2023 funded work to mark or remove 10km unmarked fences sited in the Badenoch and Strathspey area which, if left in place, presented a significant risk to resident capercaillie.

IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/CLAWSONPAWIS



The wild food team works across BASC to ensure shooting's end product is embedded in the association's strategy. It runs the Eat Game campaign and the Eat Game Awards.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Promote game meat to the end user.
- ◆ Demonstrate the benefits of game meat to the public.
- ◆ Ensure that game meat is a priority within BASC and the supply chain by promoting best practice.

Activity in 2023

The BASC wild food team has been working hard to ensure the new Brexit regulations around Approved Game Handling Establishments (AGHE) and meat inspections are fit for purpose. The new ruling that stated all meat must be inspected within 24 hours was unworkable. Together with other organisations, BASC has lobbied the Food Standards Agency to change its requirements. We hope that a viable alternative will be put in place soon.

The team has also helped to develop the British Quality Wild Venison Assurance scheme, which was launched to deer stalkers in April 2023, and will have a pivotal part to play in its launch to the public through the Eat Game Brand in 2024. Wild food has also organised and delivered kitchen theatres at both the National Shooting Show and The Game Fair.

Following the success of the chef podcast series, we commissioned another series of six chefs, including celebrity chefs Lisa Goodwin-Allen from the Northcote, Simon Wood (former MasterChef winner), Michelin-starred Hywel Griffiths and

Callum Leslie from The Black Swan at Oldstead. These will be released in early 2024. In addition, we released a podcast around the Eat Game Awards with interviews with winners and participants which captured the excitement of the evening.

The future chefs project has gathered momentum with more hospitality colleges inviting us back to train new students. We now attend more than 40 colleges. The class numbers tend to be small, but this helps to ensure we deliver a quality product. The project works with the regional officers who deliver the field-to-producer story. The game covered usually depends on what is in season and includes pigeon, rabbit, pheasant, partridge, grouse, duck and venison.

The Wild Food stage at the BBC Good Food Show at the NEC was sponsored by BASC again in 2023 and was run by the South East team. More than 75,000 people attended the show, with many trying game for the very first time.

As usual, we produced our annual recipe leaflets, and in 2023 recipes for them were supplied by Hywel Griffiths and The Game Fair favourite Rachel Green. We send more than 100,000 of them to suppliers, farm shops and game dealers. Recipes were also developed and uploaded to the Eat Game website.

The national Eat Game Awards exceeded expectations in 2023, with more than 10,000 votes registered in the final stages. The dinner was held at the Nave

Paddington with 280 people in attendance, creating a fantastic atmosphere. Adam Henson announced the winners who were:

- Best Game Restaurant or Pub – The Caddy Mann, Scottish Borders
- Best Game Cook/Chef – Marc Humm, sous chef at Restaurant 43, Colchester
- Best Small Retailer – Deer Box, Wiltshire
- Best Multiple Retailer – Aldi
- Best Game Butcher – Hanks' Meat and Game, Ross-on-Wye
- Best Game Added Value Product – Castle Game, Scotland
- Best Influencer – Anna Rogers, Very Good Venison
- Best Educator – Scott Rea, Worcester
- Champion of Champions – Clarendon Inn, Hebden, North Yorkshire

Looking ahead

We will continue to promote game meat through various channels and look to develop new ways of reaching emerging audiences for game meat through digital platform and live events. We are especially looking at Meatopia, an ultimate celebration of meat and fire, at the heart of London.

The colleges project will be off to Northern Ireland to do a tour of six hospitality colleges, training chefs about game.

Promoting the British Quality Wild Venison scheme to the consumer to increase demand for wild venison will be our priority in 2024.

CASE STUDY

The Game Fair

The Game Fair's Wild Food Theatre is a highlight for many people in attendance, and BASC's wild food team has been in charge of the Wild Food Theatre for the past four years. In 2023, the theatre enjoyed packed audiences during all three days, with people watching celebrities, like Paul Whitehouse who beguiled them with his fishing stories while making trout pâté.

Tony Singh was back this year, cooking tandoori venison kebabs, which is a simple dish of venison marinated in spices, and venison seekh kebabs.

JB Gill was on stage with Jose Souto cooking, butchering and sharing stories about his busy life as a presenter and singer. Scott Rea, supported by our regular chef Rachel Green, brought huge crowds to the theatre. His YouTube tutorials have been immensely popular with shooters for many years – he now has nearly 3.5 million views.

Eat Game Awards Champion of Champions 2023, Lionel Strubb from the Clarendon Inn, packed in an enormous amount of quick and easy dishes into his 40-minute session, showing just how easy it is to cook game.

Other chefs included Mark Lloyd, who certainly knows how to hold an audience, and Bod Griffiths from Vale House Cookery School. New for 2023 was nutritionist Eva Humphries, the Wholefood Warrior, who explained that people don't have to be fanatical about their diet and should make sure it is balanced with wholefoods, important nutrients and protein.



Education and outreach

The education and outreach team is responsible for the creation and development of initiatives which extend BASC's engagement and participation to new audiences. Well-established programmes such as Young Shots and Women in Shooting also come under this department's scope.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Widen the accessibility and inclusivity of shooting sports by creating channels of entry, with emphasis on under-represented groups and communities.
- ◆ Develop and co-ordinate innovative engagement opportunities to enable new audiences to participate in shooting and conservation activities.
- ◆ Engage with educational providers, young people, and youth groups to demonstrate the entwined relationship between shooting and conservation.

Activity in 2023

BASC is leading by example and pioneering the way in educating and engaging the next generation. Starting with an ambitious target of 25,000 in 2021, our BASC to School project has grown rapidly year on year. Encompassing youth groups, schools, colleges, universities, and young farmers, BASC's total youth engagement during 2023 reached a colossal 45,141, thanks to the hard work of all involved. Of this figure, nearly 12,000 youngsters were introduced to game meat as a healthy and nutritious protein and gained an understanding of the provenance and auxiliary benefits to biodiversity.

From nature walks to bird boxes and tree planting to food chains, our involvement with school groups is aligned to the curriculum, interactive and, above

all, fun. We have a duty to inspire and empower young people to take an interest in the management of the countryside and the practices which allow it to function and flourish. We also need them to make informed decisions.

BASC continues its support for Young Farmers and has delivered dozens of events for local groups across the UK, including social events, firearms best practice and general licence sessions. In partnership with the National Federation of Young Farmers' Club, BASC facilitated and ran the clay shooting championship at Oakedge Shooting Ground which saw 60 competitors in attendance from around the country. The event was a tremendous success.

The Legacy Funded Scholarship programme continues to remove financial barriers for young people to pursue careers in the land management sector. In 2023, we received the highest number of applications yet in one single year. Since the programme's launch in 2019, BASC has awarded close to £60,000 in scholarships to students across the country, studying a range of courses from diploma level through to master's degree.

Looking ahead

Let's Learn Moor hit a milestone during 2023, surpassing 10,000 children who had experienced our incredible uplands. The project will return in summer 2024, and we have some exciting new locations lined up

for the children to explore. Let's Learn Moor is the perfect example of collaborative work. Hosted by the estates and regional moorland groups, it brings together a range of partners to paint a true picture of our moorlands, all the while providing the children with an opportunity to run through the heather, squeeze water out of sphagnum and operate wildfire extinguishing equipment.

A key workstream in 2024 will be the development of new curriculum options to ensure the future is secure for those wishing to study land-based courses at college, with a view to seeking employment within the sector. We will be working with external partners to ensure we have a sector-approved educational route for those looking at a future career in game and wildlife management.





CASE STUDY

Women in Shooting

During summer 2023 BASC Ladies Shooting was rebranded to BASC Women in Shooting. The change of terminology modernised our language and helped align us with other recognisable sporting disciplines, such as football, tennis, rugby and, of course, competitive clay shooting at major events like the Olympics.

In celebration of this rebrand, we organised two member-exclusive events – a rifle range day and a simulated Macnab – and both were huge successes.

The range day at Bisley provided practical rifle shooting experience and an understanding of its application within deer management and target shooting. Many of the attending women were new to this discipline, but under one-to-one instruction they had the opportunity to shoot static targets and replicate the DSC1 shooting test. Some progressed to shoot running deer and boar targets.

The Women in Shooting simulated Macnab was held within the stunning grounds of the Swinton Park Estate in North Yorkshire. This multi-disciplined event provided participants with the opportunity to experience simulated walked-up grouse, deer stalking and fly fishing under the guidance of fishing guru Marina Gibson and the Northern Fishing School guides.



**BASC
Women in
Shooting**

IMAGE: CALLUM McHERN & RILEY

England

BASC in your area

BASC has five regional offices in England – North, Central, East, South East and South West. All regions do extensive work with local politicians, the police, media and various other stakeholders to ensure a safe future for shooting. They also run a variety of courses and events for both members and newcomers.

Activity in 2023

It was an eventful year with some unexpected challenges. The good news is that we are a resilient and resourceful team, with the skills to deliver what our membership needs. Our objectives focused on shoot engagement, ensuring members were well briefed and had the tools to secure their sustainable shooting activities. We also highlighted the benefits which shooting delivers for communities, nature and the economy. No different from any other year, our work was extremely varied, covering individual needs, shoots, the trade and the public.

We undertook 370 shoot briefings while hosting 1,646 people at sustainable ammunition events, providing the opportunity to try new products, listen to experts and discuss concerns. By the end of 2023, we had submitted our final consultation response to the Health and Safety Executive on proposals to restrict the use of lead ammunition in England, Scotland and Wales.

In May 2023, Defra announced that pheasant and red-legged partridge release within special protection areas would require an individual licence due to avian influenza concerns. This caused turmoil across many shoots in England, and the weeks that followed were a huge challenge. Shoots had ordered birds and put a lot of work and investment in already, yet they had no idea if they would even get

a licence. It was vital that our regional teams reacted quickly, supporting shoots and facilitating meetings with politicians to highlight the damage this knee-jerk reaction was having. As Defra advice shifted on an almost daily basis, whenever possible we helped overturn decisions and unworkable conditions.

In July, United Utilities (UU) made a shock announcement to stop renewing shoot leases on its land, creating potential implications for shoots who rent from other institutional landowners. After hours of calls and meetings, UU finally committed to a detailed consultation and review of all shoots, with tenancies remaining in place in the meantime. We now have a real opportunity to show what shooting delivers and ensure other organisations and landowners view shoots as part of the solution and not the problem.

Events and shows are an important part of our work. MPs attended 128 BASC events in 2023. At The Game Fair alone the team delivered 470 shotgun lessons and experiences and 641 airgun experiences, while providing advice to thousands of members and non-members alike. Our regional firearms teams had 354 formal engagements with firearms licensing departments in 2023, and we undertook 183 engagements or training events with police forces.



Wales

BASC in your area

BASC Wales aims to provide a public voice for shooting and conservation in Wales with cross-party support in the Welsh Parliament. The team lobbies on the issues affecting shooting and conservation in Wales, which includes balanced coverage in the Welsh media. We work to defend the freedom of private firearms ownership, promote healthy quarry populations and habitats, and encourage access to shooting in Wales.

Activity in 2023

The Wales team delivered a full year of successful events and engagement with members, despite the continual pressures from Welsh Government.

Several months were focused on the Act Now campaign to encourage the shooting community to respond to the significant threat towards game shooting in Wales, which led to thousands of responses.

This resulted in Natural Resources Wales (NRW) needing more time to review them all. We will continue to challenge Welsh Government with potential legal action over the proposed licensing of gamebird releasing in Wales.

The Royal Welsh Show closely followed the end of the campaign and we continued to stride ahead with breaking every engagement record. We put more than 940 adults and children through our airgun line experience and the main BASC Wales stand won an award for the Best Exhibit of Educational and Instructional Value.

Our primary focus was on engagement with stakeholders and Members of the Senedd (MSs). This flourished, too, with members from the Welsh Labour, Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Conservative parties all enjoying their first experiences of clay pigeon shooting. We introduced MSs and MPs to wildfowling clubs and game shoots across Wales to ensure the voices of our community were being heard. The team

promoted fantastic Welsh game meat by getting MSs to come along to evening events which give opportunities to interact with members and eat this delicious produce. We've responded to various Welsh Government consultations and continued our role as secretary for the cross-party group for shooting and conservation.

We proceeded to improve relationships with partners, including all four police forces, for the interest of our members. We worked closely with the firearms licensing teams to tackle any issues and help improve performance where possible, including delays that members are experiencing in the renewal and grant of applications for certificates. We also assisted, where possible, with legal and technical issues and provided continued professional development to various departments in the forces. The Wales team endeavours to build good working relations with rural crime teams, and this includes explanations of the use of firearms in the rural environment and the legislation which can be used where firearms are used unlawfully.

The team is fully committed to making sure Welsh voices and scientific evidence is heard by decision makers in Wales. The team is here to support and advise you on how to get involved and be part of this journey.



Scotland

BASC in your area

BASC Scotland is well placed to deal with the many important shooting and conservation issues affecting people living in and visiting Scotland. Team members also specialise in firearms-related issues in Scotland. They engage extensively at Scottish Government, Holyrood and Westminster levels, highlighting and influencing change in key issues affecting the Scottish shooting and conservation sector.

Activity in 2023

The year was dominated by the Hunting with Dogs Bill, and the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, referred to as the grouse bill. We spent time engaging and lobbying numerous ministers and more than 50 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), face-to-face or via exhibitions at Holyrood, as well as during various visits to numerous estates across both Angus and Grampian.

We attended the Scottish Conservative Conference in Glasgow in March and the SNP Conference in Aberdeen in October, holding informative fringe events to highlight the importance of sustainable land management and rural communities. We had excellent members' support, seeing more than 1,000 signatories support a letter to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee in support of crucial changes to the grouse bill to make the licensing scheme more workable. BASC lodged key amendments around our concerns over the disproportionate and unworkable nature of the bill, with many of these being adopted by ministers.

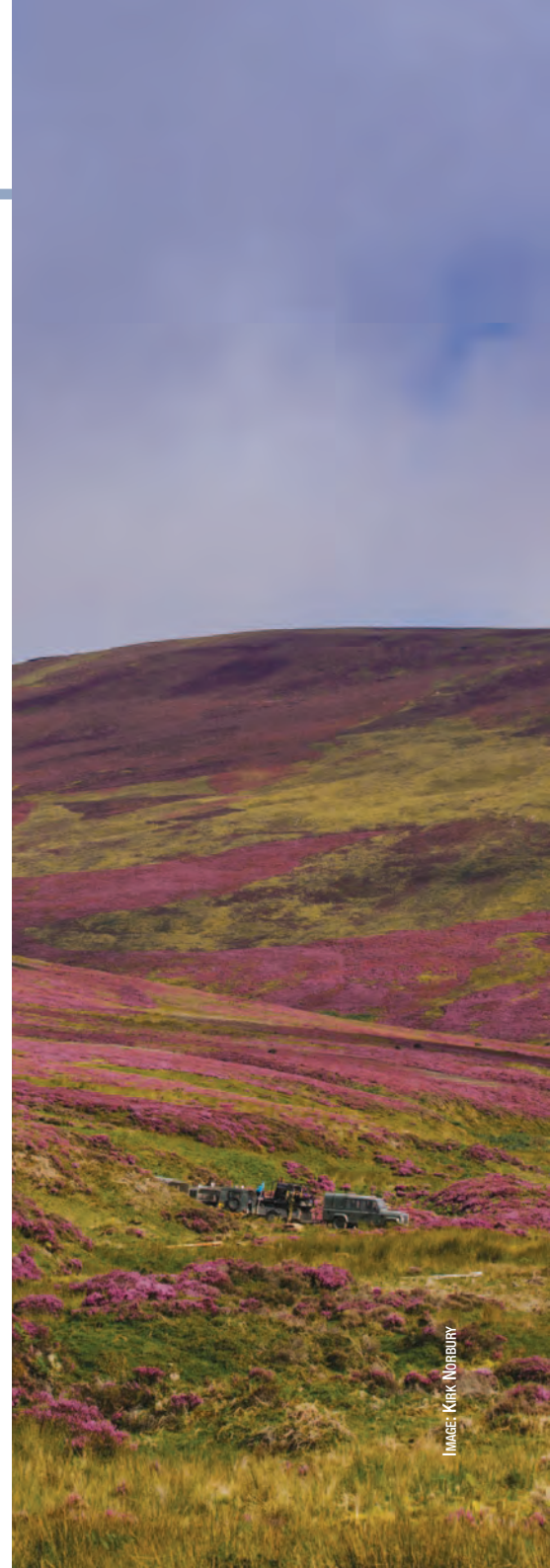
BASC Scotland took part in the Estates That Educate initiative across June on two estates within Strathdon and Angus, where 300 attendees took part in educational countryside experiences learning about biodiversity, country sports and the benefits they bring to our fragile rural

communities, as well as the various career opportunities that are available. We provided air rifle and game tasting workshops to the event and look forward to being their main sponsor in 2024, helping to expand the project.

During the Great British Game Week, we held two fantastic dinners to promote locally sourced wild game, working closely with two talented chefs, Lucy Pattinson of Fodder + Farm and Sanjay Bhattacharya from Finzean Farm Shop. Both evenings were sold out and promoted game as a healthy and sustainable food produce. Influencers attended these events, spreading the positive message about eating game and venison.

As part of our transition to sustainable ammunition, a large event with more than 100 participants was held at Gleneagles Shooting School, with a range of speakers and ammunition on offer. We also held sustainable ammunition days right across Scotland, which were well attended by members and parliamentarians.

BASC was present at all major countryside events and game fairs. More than 150 children and young people took part in the SYCET Junior Macnab Challenge over the course of these game fairs. We had high profile politicians, such as Kate Forbes MSP, try clay pigeon shooting and take part in game lunches.



Northern Ireland

BASC in your area

BASC Northern Ireland (NI) is widely recognised not only for its success in resolving members' firearms licensing issues, but also for wider work on NI firearms and wildlife legislation. The team's work throughout NI is supported by BASC colleagues in head office across all departments, which is why BASC is the organisation that is best placed to promote and protect all aspects of shooting in Northern Ireland.

Activity in 2023

We worked to maintain good relationships with influential Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) across most political parties, despite the lack of a functioning Assembly. Our relationship with those MLAs is critically important if we are to count on their support when threats to shooting arise.

We challenged the Department of Agriculture, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DAERA) decision to remove several species from their general licences that permit the killing or taking of pest birds. The challenge provided the opportunity for BASC to consider the evidence DAERA used in its decision-making process.

Our work with partner organisations on the Northern Ireland Firearms Representative Group, which is chaired by BASC, continued. Collectively, we worked hard to rebuild relationships with the Police Service of Northern Ireland's firearms and explosives branch, and to help bring much needed improvements to the firearms licensing system.

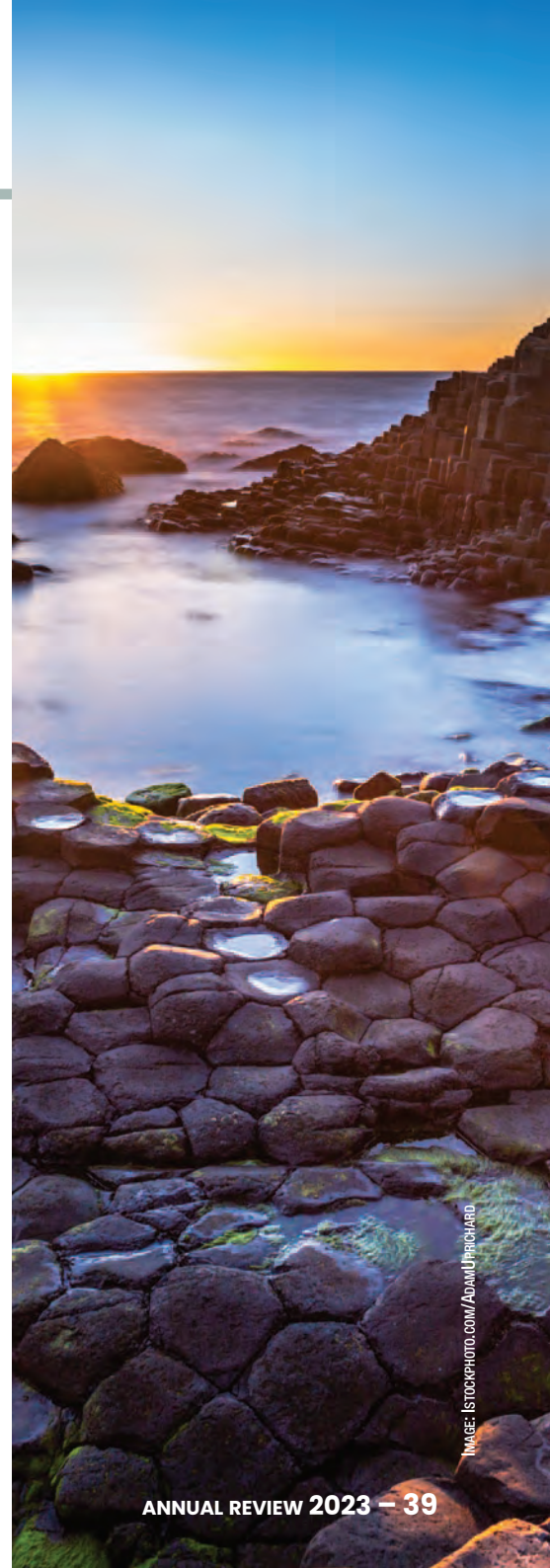
We have provided the highest level of member representation, particularly on firearms related issues. Our success in this area is widely recognised, and BASC continues to be seen as the go-to organisation on such matters.

We worked closely with Baronscourt

Estate and several catering colleges across NI, to help educate trainee chefs in relation to the provenance, sustainability, and versatility of game meat, prior to them cooking up their own game-based meals using venison, duck, and pheasant, kindly donated by Baronscourt.

Our work with affiliated wildfowling clubs has helped ensure their constitutions and rules are fit for purpose. We have also worked closely with the National Trust and the Joint Council for Wildfowling Clubs on Strangford Lough, to ensure good relations between local residents and wildfowlers around the lough.

We ran a schedule of pop-up events at firearms dealers' premises, providing advice and guidance to members and non-members across a wide range of issues. We also ran a very successful Young Shots Activity Day, two Deer Stalking Certificate Level 1 (DSC1) courses and an Intermediate Deer Stalking Course at Baronscourt Estate. Other events included a very successful Talking Stalking evening which we ran in conjunction with BDS NI, and a Try Sustainable Ammunition Day at Tannyoky Guns and Ammo near Newry.



Insurance

BASC insurance provides a specially tailored insurance package for shooters. It covers a wide range of BASC recreational activities, from wildfowling and deer stalking to airgunning and ferreting.

BASC insurance is a policy of 'first resort' which means in the event of a claim, the BASC insurance claims team will take on the claim and deal with it, regardless of what other policies you may have in place. We will only seek a contribution from other policies as part of our process in the background, without any delay to the settlement.

Many other policies are of 'last resort' which means if you make a claim on one of them, the policy will not respond until you can prove that you have no other insurance in place that could cover the claim.

With BASC liability insurance you automatically receive:

- up to £10 million public liability cover;
- up to £10 million employer liability cover; and
- up to £10 million product liability cover.

The policies provide worldwide cover (excluding North America and Canada) with a limitation of 90 days to cover holidays for members residing permanently in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

In addition, BASC liability insurance provides cover for:

- humane dispatch (excluding humane dispatch of owned farm stock or domestic animals); and
- the sale of meat or other small income derived from such recreational shooting activities (providing this is not your primary source of income).

As well as liability insurance, BASC membership also includes personal accident insurance of up to £50,000, covering personal accidents resulting in the loss of sight, hearing, or limbs and any other permanent type of disablement

while engaged in BASC recreational activities. If you're a gamekeeper or river keeper, the personal accident insurance is extended to cover you 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Affiliated club and syndicate member cover includes:

- additional guest insurance, providing the guests do not exceed 50 per cent of the party;
- additional public liability related to fundraising or education and awareness raising events. For example, if you wanted to put on a clay shoot to raise awareness and funds, as long as you notify BASC of the event taking place, this element of the insurance will cover you; and
- access to additional dog injury protection. If a working dog is injured as a result of your club's or syndicate's negligence, then the cover will respond up to a cost of £2,500 per incident.



CASE STUDY

Shoot day incident

John, a member of BASC, was out enjoying a day's driven shooting with friends. During the second drive, he slipped and fell, losing control of his shotgun. An accidental shot was fired and some of the pellets struck another person causing a minor injury.

John contacted BASC insurance and was supported by the claim team. Phil, the injured party, was contacted by the claim team and details of the incident were taken. BASC claims team provided immediate assistance, from covering medical expenses to liaising with Phil's legal team.

The claim was dealt with professionally and as quickly as possible. John was given the full support of the claim team throughout this challenging time.

It is a fact of life that accidents happen. It is reassuring to know that in a situation like this BASC is here to help both the member and the injured party, by providing financial and practical support.



Member benefits

At BASC we campaign for the future and wellbeing of our sport, but our members also profit from a wide range of exceptional services and benefits.

In addition to representation, expert advice, advocacy, events, courses and sporting opportunities – all of which are detailed in this publication – two of the fundamental benefits of BASC membership are its insurance cover and the array of offers available on a wide variety of products and services. Additionally, members continue to receive complimentary entry to The Game Fair and the National Shooting Show.

BASC insurance

All members are automatically protected by the BASC group insurance package while engaged in BASC-recognised recreational activities. This includes:

- up to £10 million public, employers' and product liability cover; and
- up to £50,000 personal accident cover.

Member offers

BASC members have access to offers across a range of products, goods and services, varying from vehicles to bespoke insurance and shooting accessories.*

The key objective of the BASC commercial services team is to generate income for the association over and above that of membership subscriptions. This enables us to invest in and deliver increased member services while reducing pressure on subscription rates. The team achieves this by forming commercial partnerships with key businesses and negotiating special offers on products, goods and services that have a relationship with shooting. Members are kept up to

date on our latest offers via the BASC *Shooting and Conservation* magazine, website, social media, monthly email marketing service and newsletter to BASC trade members.

Savings by BASC members in 2023

During 2023, members saved more than £5.3 million on the purchase of new vehicles from 24 manufacturers. Throughout 2023, BASC members continued to access excellent deals on a wide range of products and services including vehicles, motoring accessories, trailers, discounted fuel cards, bespoke insurances, dog drying coats, books, hearing protection and more.

The offering of our email marketing service has been popular during 2023, allowing BASC trade members to advertise products and services to 124,190 BASC members, on average, in each monthly paid-for distribution. In 2023, this digital marketing service brought BASC an additional income through advertisers purchasing slots within our monthly distributions.

On behalf of BASC and our official commercial partners, we would like to thank those members who have taken advantage of our offers and contributed to the ongoing success of the organisation.

BASC is a trading name of British Association for Shooting and Conservation which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under firm reference number 311937. You may check this on the Financial Services Register by visiting the FCA's website or by contacting the FCA on 0800 111 6768

*T&Cs apply for a number of our member offers



Working together

Collaboration with various organisations and partners is a key element of our strategy to achieve our objectives. BASC works with all political parties, parliamentary groups, legislative bodies, government departments (through their ministers and senior staff), police committees and many organisations with an interest in shooting, nature and conservation. We routinely produce evidence-based briefings for policymakers and MPs.

What BASC does

- We provide the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and Conservation.
- We have a partnership agreement with Natural England.
- We co-host receptions at the Conservative and Labour party conferences with the Angling Trust.
- We work on European legislation on firearms, shooting and conservation with the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE).
- We are one of the partners within Aim to Sustain, which was launched in 2021, and we sit on the British Shooting Sports Council.
- We work with the UK Squirrel Accord to enhance woodland health and red squirrel recovery through grey squirrel and woodland management.

BASC's ability to work with such a wide range of stakeholders demonstrates the flexibility of our community and broadness of our interests and goals. Our openness and readiness to engage at all times sends a very powerful message.

A few of the key organisations BASC continues to work with...



Sponsorship

The BASC commercial services team develops a range of sponsorship agreements that help defray significant costs incurred in the delivery of activities such as training programmes and gundog events. Throughout 2023, BASC had official sponsorship agreements with Eley Hawk, Browning, BSA, Leica, Promatic, Skinner's and Sporting Saint. Our sponsors provide essential products and funding, which allows BASC to deliver effective initiatives and events across the UK.

The year 2023 saw BASC facilitate both the .410 World Championship and the Best in the Field clay shoot. For these events, we would like to thank both our official sponsors for their continued support and our event sponsors for their contributions to the events, namely Northside Maxus, MTS, Tyson Cooper, Quiller, Isuzu, Browning, MTS Tyres and Alan Paine.

We thank our sponsors for their generous support and continue to uphold these vital working relationships through an increasing level of brand exposure received at BASC events, shows and training programmes. We also aim to support and promote our sponsors where possible through our various media channels.

Legacy-funded projects

It is thanks to the generosity of members who have remembered the association in their wills that, during 2023, BASC's Legacy Fund was used to support important projects that helped to secure the future of shooting.

The key areas that we use the Legacy Fund for include:

- work that brings young people into shooting and educates children about shooting and country sports;
- conservation work to safeguard our rural heritage and to demonstrate how important shooting is in preserving our landscapes and native wildlife;
- work to increase opportunities to go shooting; and
- political work to safeguard our continued ability to shoot.

In 2023, legacy funding helped support:

- the launch of the BASC Sponsorship Programme;
- the BASC Legacy Scholarship Programme 2023;
- the Let's Learn Moor initiative;
- sustainable ammunition days;
- woodcock survey in Northern Ireland;
- Value of Shooting research; and
- Hen Harrier Brood Management Project.

Thanks to the remarkable generosity of members who elect to support BASC in their wills, the association can undertake a wide variety of activities which meet the key objectives of the Legacy Fund.

One of the most crucial aspects of future proofing shooting is ensuring young people feel inspired and excited to take up shooting sports and are provided a route to do so. In addition, engaging with new

audiences is also vitally important from a public perception and sustainability outlook. Educating young people and empowering them to take an interest in the natural world leads to a greater understanding of how the countryside is managed, including the biodiversity benefits associated with shooting.

The BASC Legacy Fund underpins several projects which specifically support young people. In 2023, Let's Learn Moor reached a considerable milestone, having seen more than 10,000 children, plus hundreds of teachers, experience the project. Let's Learn Moor gives children, the majority of whom have never visited upland areas, the opportunity to run across the sphagnum, speak with gamekeepers, learn about wildfire prevention, and taste wild food from the moors.

The Legacy Funded Scholarship programme continues to remove financial barriers for young people to pursue careers in the land management sector. The programme was launched in 2019 and to date has awarded nearly £60,000. In 2023, we received the highest number of applications since the programme's inception, which demonstrates the need for this mechanism of financial support. The scholarships also help identify youth ambassadors for shooting and support them along their journey, providing them access to key contacts and experiences.

From a level 2 diploma in game and wildlife management through to a master's

in research of endangered species recovery and conservation, the scholarship programme has supported a huge range of students and their study programmes across a variety of colleges and universities.

In 2023, a new addition to the legacy suite was created. The BASC Sponsorship Programme was launched with an aim to support and encourage those young people participating in competitive clay or target shooting who were looking to progress towards representing their country as part of a national team.

The sponsorship complements the existing scholarship programme and is a demonstration of how much importance BASC places on supporting young people. It is designed to nurture talent which can be used to demonstrate the importance of shooting to wider audiences. With the Olympics taking place in 2024, it is an opportunity to showcase competitive shooting and encourage wider participation.

Following a comprehensive application and interview process, Olivia Stevens and William Canter were selected as the two successful recipients. Olivia is a DTL shooter from Leicestershire and is training for the England team with aspirations of competing at the next world championships. William, from Buckinghamshire, is an Olympic Trap shooter who is on the British Shooting development pathway. His ultimate ambition is to represent Great Britain.

CASE STUDY

Funding for professional qualifications

Charlie Newman was awarded a Legacy Funded Scholarship in 2020 when he was studying a Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in Land and Wildlife Management at Sparsholt College.

Funding was used to supply essential PPE, such as chainsaw equipment, and to undertake additional professional qualifications to increase employability options such as the DSC1, rodenticide use, first aid and tree felling. Charlie said: "I was so grateful for this financial assistance from BASC. Being able to gain extra certifications allowed me to start my career with additional knowledge and confidence. The clothing we need is expensive, so the funding really helped with that. I would strongly encourage anyone studying, or hoping to study, these courses to consider applying for a scholarship."

Following graduation, Charlie was employed as a deer stalker at Mar Lodge Estate, in the Cairngorms National Park, working for National Trust Scotland. The estate is roughly 72,500 acres, consisting of a split between traditionally managed moorland with a residual red deer population, and a regenerative area with a closely managed low deer population. Charlie spends most of his time on his beat (20,000 acres of upland and mountainous terrain), reducing herbivore impact for the purposes of enhancing the natural regeneration of Caledonian pine forest. Throughout the stalking season, he also assists in hosting sporting clients on the moorland zone, which is managed in a traditional manner.

IMAGE: CHARLIE NEWMAN





IMAGE: TOP SHOTS PHOTO COMP/HARRY LESSMAN

BASC's financial position at the end of 2023

The group's statements of comprehensive income and financial position are laid out here. The group includes the association and its subsidiary, BASC Direct Limited. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation Limited is a registered society, no. 28488R.

A full copy of the report of the Executive and Finance Committee and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023 is available on the BASC website (basc.org.uk/financial-report). Hard copies are available by post. In order to receive a hard copy, please contact BASC reception on 01244 573 000.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Turnover	4	12,577,340	12,748,239
Gross surplus		12,577,340	12,748,239
Administrative expenses		(13,657,566)	(12,368,623)
Other operating income	5	–	–
Investment gains		582,120	(688,441)
Operating surplus	6	(498,106)	394,539
Interest receivable and similar income	9	123,291	17,880
Surplus before taxation		(374,815)	412,419
Tax on surplus	10	(128,404)	108,037
Surplus for the financial year		(503,219)	520,456
Deficit on impairment/revaluation of tangible fixed assets		–	(301,914)
Other comprehensive income for the year		–	(301,914)
Total comprehensive income for the year		(503,219)	218,542

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Intangible assets	11		27,876		41,283
Tangible assets	12		2,156,048		2,038,203
Heritage assets	14		481,736		481,736
			<u>2,665,660</u>		<u>2,561,222</u>
Current Assets					
Stocks	15	6,470		9,582	
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	16	3,679,188		3,290,043	
Current asset investments	17	8,750,386		8,085,638	
Cash at bank and in hand	18	4,597,153		5,949,100	
			<u>17,033,197</u>		<u>17,334,363</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	19	(8,353,349)		(8,104,301)	
Net Current Assets			8,679,848		9,230,062
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>11,345,508</u>		<u>11,791,284</u>
Deferred taxation	20	(57,443)		–	
			<u>(57,443)</u>		<u>–</u>
Net assets			<u>11,288,065</u>		<u>11,791,284</u>
Capital and reserves					
Revaluation reserve	22		915,481		915,481
Legacy fund	22		489,092		590,327
Fighting fund	22		276,937		550,262
BASC Wildlife fund	22		711,652		703,364
Accumulated fund	22		–		718,284
Profit and loss account	22		8,894,903		8,313,566
			<u>11,288,065</u>		<u>11,791,284</u>

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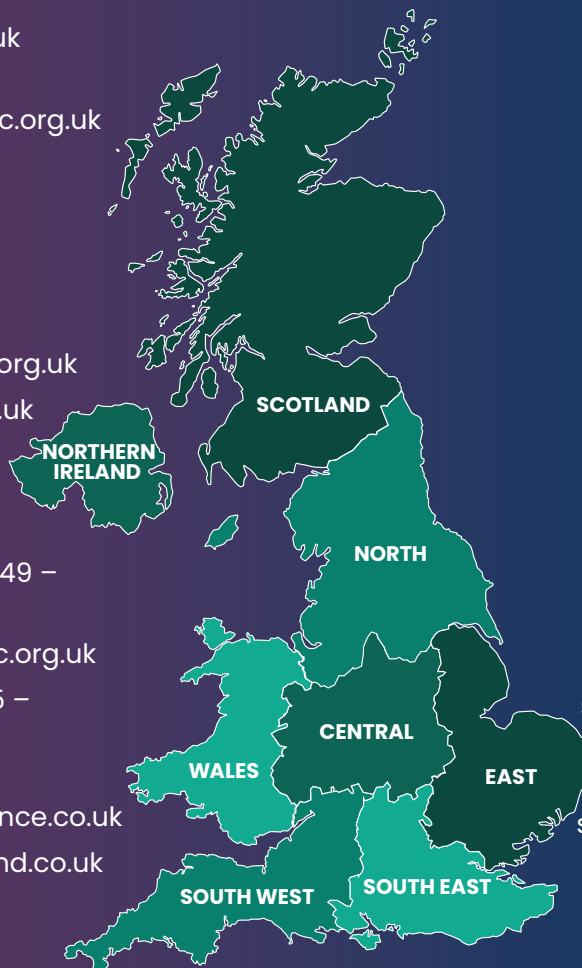
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