

Treasurer
Mr Graham Hodgson

Secretary
Dr Nichol Watson



Established in 1960

President: Sir John Scott, Bt.

Chairman: Mr George Ashcroft

Re: Letter of Support – Nomination of Wildfowling for Inclusion in the UK Living Heritage Inventory

On behalf of Newcastle Wildfowler's Association, I am writing to express our strong belief in that **Wildfowling** is an important element of **UK Living Heritage Inventory**, and to confirm that we fully support the efforts of the **British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)** to seek formal recognition of wildfowling in the UK Living Heritage Inventories.

Our wildfowling club was established in **1960** and has maintained an active wildfowling community for **66 years** on the foreshore and wetlands, including local sites of Lindisfarne and more recently the river Wansbeck Estuary (since 2004). Our members, and club have links with other wildfowling areas such as Solway, and Montrose for example. The members are actively involved in shooting and conservation on areas, as well as some transferable knowledge to other shooting environments inland. Wildfowling in our area represents a long-established traditional practice, sustained through shared knowledge, customary skills, carefully safeguarded and handed down from one generation to the next. The club is proud to have regular meetings to promote ideas within the group and exchange of ideas to non-members but interested parties. Guest speakers are regular fixtures of the clubs' calendar. The club regularly attends Wildfowling promotion days, lead and assist with guiding visits to sites, as well as evolving methods to evoke interest for people, such as Young Shots Days, Lindisfarne Permit involvement and new person introductions, stand at Country Shows and Game Fairs to promote the activities. Our members are actively part of prominent wildfowling bodies within the UK, BASC for example but also Lindisfarne Management Group at a Local level. Our Wansbeck site has been utilised for a Sea Grass regeneration project.

UK wildfowling has a history dating back centuries. It possesses a number of elements that set it aside as a living and evolving practice combining traditional knowledge and skills to maintain a sustainable harvest. It includes locally rooted knowledge of tides, weather, habitat conditions and the behaviour of the plants and animals found in coastal areas managed for wildfowling. These practices embody a close, beneficial relationship with nature underpinned by a strict ethical code, established safety practices, and a strong sense of responsibility towards the environment. Wildfowlers will regularly utilise and handle competent dogs and dog breeds, long bred for the particular conditions attached to Wildfowling. Often retrieving breeds such as Labrador, but also more minor breeds for example Chesapeake Bay, Nova Scotia Duck Tollers, Curly Coat, Flat Coat, Irish Water Spaniels are seen within the Wildfowling community.

Historically wildfowling was an important source of livelihood in coastal areas and an affordable source of food within traditional coastal foodways. Wildfowling's role in shaping coastal areas and traditions is reflected in landscape, local language and customary practices.

Wildfowling skills and traditions continue to be transmitted through informal teaching, mentoring and community involvement supporting a strong connection to place, local identity, and conservation engagement with wetlands.

Inclusion in the UK Living Heritage Inventory would provide appropriate recognition of wildfowling as a living tradition and would help ensure that the associated knowledge, customs and community practices are recorded and safeguarded for future generations. For these reasons, Newcastle Wildfowler's Association is pleased to offer our full support for the nomination of wildfowling to the UK Living Heritage Inventory,

N. Watson

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Hon Secretary Newcastle Wildfowler's Association