

What is a Wildfowler?

Wildfowlers are a prime example of a social group with a vested interest in the wellbeing of the estuarine environment, not only that, wildfowling undoubtedly provides important recreational, well-being and exercise benefits for its participants.

Wildfowlers along with certain types of fishermen probably have the deepest cultural association with estuaries than any other social group, it could be argued that whilst wildfowling is generally a solitary activity, the experience, in many cases, is one shared with our ancestors, and the pursuit of wildfowl in these wetlands provides a deep cultural connection with the past and the inspiration to ensure that these estuarine environments are preserved for the future.

Wildfowling is an intimate experience shared with the environment, weather, and the birds we see, hear, and might shoot, and if we are lucky we get to eat some of the healthiest and most free-range meat there is. It is the nearest you get to being in a natural state, and at one with nature.

Wildfowling has a strong affinity with hunter gatherer communities who still in many countries enjoy 'native rights' to hunt over large areas of protected wetlands.

Wildfowlers are stakeholders, custodians, wardens, and conservationists. We have huge resources of experience and an intimate relationship with our marshes that provides us with a unique perspective. We are the ones who will be always willing to talk, and always willing to put in the time and the effort for the wellbeing of our estuaries and wetlands.

*(Author **Ian Ryding**)*