

BASC guidance on responding to the British bird quarry species review

8 April 2026

Introduction

On 23 March, Defra launched a consultation on a review of the bird quarry lists in England, Wales and Scotland. The consultation closes on 17 May and BASC is encouraging people to respond in various ways. The following guidance is for those wishing to complete the online consultation response form.

The online consultation response form can be accessed from this webpage:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-crime-and-management/www-gov-uk-government-consultations-greater-protoc/>

If you would prefer to respond to the consultation by email or in the post visit the following webpage:

<https://basc.org.uk/british-bird-quarry-species-review/>

BASC's Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice for Wildfowl Quarry Species

Our suggestions on responding to the consultation are evidence based and underpinned by BASC's Sustainable Shooting Code of Practice for Wildfowl Quarry Species.

<https://basc.org.uk/wildfowling/advice/sustainable-shooting-code-of-practice/>

The Code was published in 2023, following an extensive evidence review of our quarry species, ensuring that harvest levels are sustainable, and responsive to changing populations.

The Code provides clear evidence led recommendations and includes positive practical interventions such as habitat creation, research or breeding support that could help recover populations.

While the concept of self-regulation may sound contemporary, it has been an integral part of BASC and the wider shooting sector for decades. Examples include the voluntary moratorium on Greenland white-fronted geese on the Dyfi estuary since the 1970s, the widely observed delay in shooting woodcock until the arrival of migratory birds (with compliance exceeding 90%), and adherence to severe weather protocols, where restraint is exercised to protect wildfowl during prolonged periods of cold weather. These longstanding measures are just a few of many that demonstrate a culture of responsibility and collective action.

BASC's Sustainable Shooting Code gets reviewed every three to five years, providing a dynamic and robust framework, in contrast to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which has seen little substantive revision in over 45 years. As such, BASC's guidance represents a proportionate, current, and effective mechanism capable of delivering sustainable shooting today and into the future.

BASC guidance on completing the online consultation response form.

Q 1. Would you like your response to be confidential?

- Yes
- **No**

Please explain your reasons for requesting confidentiality.

Q 2. What is your name?

Q 3. What is your email address?

Q 4. Please tell us who you are responding as, selecting from the following: (Please tick as many as relevant)

- Animal welfare/environmental organisation
- Shooting organisation
- Other non-governmental organisation
- **Member of the public**
- Other (Please specify)
- Prefer not to say

Q 5. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation you are responding for. If you are responding for more than one organisation, please say how many organisations you represent and their category (as set out in the previous question).

N/A

Q 6. If you are a business, how would you identify based on your number of employees?

- Micro (1 - 9 employees)
- Small (10 – 49 employees)
- Medium (50 - 249 employees)
- Large (250+ employees)
- Not applicable

Q 7. Considering the reform proposal, are you able to provide any feedback on additional wider impacts to business, competition and trade, skills and training requirements and investment within the sector?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond "Yes" if you can provide this information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence where possible.

Q 8. If you are a Small and Micro Business (SMB) (qualified as 1-49 employees), are you able to provide any information on impacts, including on additional costs, from the proposed reform?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond "Yes" if you can provide this information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence where possible.

Q 9. If you are a Medium-sized business (50-249 employees), are you able to provide any information on impacts, including on additional costs, from the proposed reforms?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond "Yes" if you can provide this information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence where possible.

Q 10. Do you foresee any impacts on business from the proposed reform being different between regions across the UK?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond "Yes" if you can provide this information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence where possible.

Q 11. Please select the geographical coverage of your organisation or the area that your response relates to from the following: (Please tick as many as are relevant)

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- Republic of Ireland
- UK
- Other (please state where)

Q 4A1: Do you agree the European white-fronted goose should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in England and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If "Yes",

- Both nations
- England only
- Wales only

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC already provides harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their Sustainable shooting code is reviewed every 3–5 years, making it a dynamic and effective mechanism to ensure that harvest is, and continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The European white-fronted goose population is stable or increasing across its European flyway, with UK wintering numbers affected by climate-driven “short-stopping” rather than true population declines.
6. Local declines are driven by winter distribution shifts and habitat conditions, not hunting pressure.
7. Hunting pressure is extremely low (<100 birds annually) and there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, working with international partners to monitor population trends, breeding success, and migration patterns to ensure long-term sustainability.

Q 4A2: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of European white-fronted goose that are shot in England and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 4B1: Do you agree the goldeneye should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in England and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If “Yes”,

- Both nations
- England only
- Wales only

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC’s code.

Additional points

5. The goldeneye population is stable at a global level but shows a moderate decline across the UK, with changes in UK wintering numbers primarily influenced by climate-driven shifts in distribution and habitat use, rather than overall population loss.
6. Local UK declines are linked to habitat availability, water quality, and climate-driven distribution shifts, not hunting pressure.
7. Hunting pressure is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually across the UK, and there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable).
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, working with international partners to monitor population trends, breeding success, and migration patterns to ensure long-term sustainability.

Q 4B2: Do you agree the close season for the goldeneye should be extended in Scotland to 30 September?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The goldeneye population is stable at a global level but shows a moderate decline across the UK, with changes in UK wintering numbers primarily influenced by climate-driven shifts in distribution and habitat use, rather than overall population loss.
6. Local UK declines are linked to habitat availability, water quality, and climate-driven distribution shifts, not hunting pressure.
7. Hunting pressure is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually across the UK), and there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, working with international partners to monitor population trends, breeding success, and migration patterns to ensure long-term sustainability.

Q 4B3: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of goldeneye that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 4C1: Do you agree the close season for the pintail should be extended in Scotland to 30 September for below and above the high-water mark?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The Northern Pintail population is stable globally.

6. Local UK declines are linked to wintering habitat conditions, agricultural land management, and breeding-ground productivity, not by hunting pressure.
7. Hunting pressure is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually), and scientific assessment indicates there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, focusing on monitoring over-wintering populations, improving wetland and agricultural foraging habitats, supporting breeding-ground research, to ensure the long-term sustainability of pintail populations.

Q 4C2: Do you agree the close season for the pintail should be extended in Wales to 30 November?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The Northern Pintail population is stable globally.
6. Local UK declines are linked to wintering habitat conditions, agricultural land management, and breeding-ground productivity, not by hunting pressure.
7. Hunting pressure is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually), and scientific assessment indicates there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, focusing on monitoring over-wintering populations, improving wetland and agricultural foraging habitats, supporting breeding-ground research, to ensure the long-term sustainability of pintail populations.

Q 4C3: Do you agree the pintail should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in England?

- Yes
- No – its current status should be maintained
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The Northern Pintail population is stable globally.
6. Local UK declines are linked to wintering habitat conditions, agricultural land management, and breeding-ground productivity, not by hunting pressure.

7. Hunting pressure is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually), and scientific assessment indicates there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway level, focusing on monitoring over-wintering populations, improving wetland and agricultural foraging habitats, supporting breeding-ground research, to ensure the long-term sustainability of pintail populations.

Q 4C4: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of pintail that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

4C5: Can you provide evidence on the proportion and destination (for example private domestic consumption, sold, given to third parties, etc..) of shot pintail birds?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Pintail are not regularly sold or given away. The majority are taken for personal consumption. BASC's sustainable shooting code promotes "Eat what you shoot" – "take what you need, not what you can" and recommends that pintail shouldn't be sold.

Q 4C6: Can you provide evidence on what is the market price of pintail both wholesale and retail?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Pintail are not regularly sold or given away. The majority are taken for personal consumption. BASC's sustainable shooting code promotes "Eat what you shoot" – "take what you need, not what you can" and recommends that pintail shouldn't be sold.

Q 4D1: Do you agree the pochard should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If "Yes",

- All three nations
- England
- Scotland

- Wales

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. The Common Pochard population shows widespread declines.
6. The UK supports a very small proportion of the global population (<1%).
7. Hunting pressure in the UK is very low (typically a few hundred birds annually), and there is no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable.
8. However, BASC has been recommending a moratorium for Pochard since 2023, subsequently many wildfowling clubs have captured these recommendations within their rule books and constitution.

Q 4D2: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of pochard that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)
Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 4D3: Can you provide evidence on the proportion and destination (for example private domestic consumption, sold, given to third parties, etc.) of shot pochard birds?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Pochard have not regularly been sold or widely transferred to third parties. The majority were taken for personal consumption. BASC's sustainable shooting code promotes a moratorium on Pochard.

Q 4D4: Can you provide evidence on what is the market price of pochard both wholesale and retail?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Pochard have not regularly been sold or widely transferred to third parties. The majority were taken for personal consumption. BASC's sustainable shooting code promotes a moratorium on Pochard.

Q 4E1: Do you agree the close season for the common snipe should be extended in England and/or Scotland to 30 September, for reasons of both conservation and animal welfare?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If “Yes”,

- Both nations
- England only
- Scotland only

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.
5. If amendments are required to this guidance, we recommend government engagement with BASC to agree an appropriate and proportionate recommendation at the next code review, due in the next 3 years.

Additional points

6. Due to its extensive range and high abundance, common snipe is not considered threatened globally.
7. Breeding trends are relatively stable overall, with increases in some areas (e.g. England), highlighting the complex and non-harvest-related drivers of population change.
8. Scientific assessment indicates no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable, with a zero probability of unsustainable harvest identified.
9. Government should focus on habitat restoration (particularly wet grassland and peatland systems), appropriate agricultural management, predator control, and improved research into breeding success and chick survival. Management should operate at a landscape and flyway scale, with continued engagement from the shooting community to support monitoring, habitat management, and sustainable use.

Q 4E2: Do you agree the common snipe should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.

Additional points

5. There is no evidence to suggest that removal from the quarry list will help address breeding issues in Wales.
6. WeBS counts are not an effective counting mechanism for Snipe as they are a secretive species.

7. Harvest data provides an additional valuable data set.
8. Due to its extensive range and high abundance, common snipe is not considered threatened globally.
9. Breeding trends are relatively stable overall, with increases in some areas (e.g. England), highlighting the complex and non-harvest-related drivers of population change.
10. Scientific assessment indicates no evidence that current harvest is unsustainable, with a zero probability of unsustainable harvest identified.
11. Government should focus on habitat restoration (particularly wet grassland and peatland systems), appropriate agricultural management, predator control, and improved research into breeding success and chick survival. Management should operate at a landscape and flyway scale, with continued engagement from the shooting community to support monitoring, habitat management, and sustainable use.

Q 4E3: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of common snipe that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

4E4: Can you provide evidence on the proportion and destination (for example, private domestic consumption, sold, given to third parties, etc..) of shot common snipe birds?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you can provide credible information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4E5: Can you provide evidence on what is the market price of common snipe both wholesale and retail?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you have recently sold or bought this species and please provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4F1: Do you agree the close season for the woodcock should be extended in England and/or Wales to 30 November in order to protect our native breeding population?

- Yes
- No

- Do not know

If “Yes”,

- Both nations
- England only
- Wales only

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC’s code.
5. Available evidence indicates more than 90% compliance with self-regulative recommendations.

Additional points

6. The woodcock population is large and widely distributed at a global scale, with an increasing wintering population in the UK driven by migratory birds.
7. The UK breeding population represents a small proportion of the wider flyway, meaning overall population dynamics are influenced by broad-scale environmental factors rather than domestic harvest.
8. Local UK declines in the resident breeding population are linked to habitat change (particularly woodland management), climate change, and predation, rather than hunting pressure.
9. In contrast, the wintering population has increased significantly, highlighting differing drivers across seasons.
10. Although woodcock is a popular quarry species, current evidence indicates that harvest is likely to be sustainable overall, particularly given the large migratory population.
11. Voluntary restraint (e.g. delaying shooting until migrant birds arrive) is already widely practiced and contributes to a precautionary approach to harvest.
12. Maintaining sustainable shooting alongside habitat management ensures continued investment and conservation delivery by the shooting community.
13. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway and landscape scale, focusing on woodland and farmland habitat management, predator control, improved monitoring of breeding and wintering populations, and continued promotion of best-practice guidance (e.g. timing of shooting).

Q 4F2: Do you agree the close season for woodcock should be extended in Scotland to 14 November in order to protect its native breeding population?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC’s code.
5. Available evidence indicates more than 90% compliance with self-regulative recommendations.

Additional points

6. The woodcock population is large and widely distributed at a global scale, with an increasing wintering population in the UK driven by migratory birds.
7. The UK breeding population represents a small proportion of the wider flyway, meaning overall population dynamics are influenced by broad-scale environmental factors rather than domestic harvest.
8. Local UK declines in the resident breeding population are linked to habitat change (particularly woodland management), climate change, and predation, rather than hunting pressure.
9. In contrast, the wintering population has increased significantly, highlighting differing drivers across seasons.
10. Although woodcock are a popular quarry species, current evidence indicates that harvest is likely to be sustainable overall, particularly given the large migratory population.
11. Voluntary restraint (e.g. delaying shooting until migrant birds arrive) is already widely practiced and contributes to a precautionary approach to harvest.
12. Maintaining sustainable shooting alongside habitat management ensures continued investment and conservation delivery by the shooting community.
13. Government should engage collaboratively at a flyway and landscape scale, focusing on woodland and farmland habitat management, predator control, improved monitoring of breeding and wintering populations, and continued promotion of best-practice guidance (e.g. timing of shooting).

Q 4F3: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of woodcock that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)
Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 4F4: Can you provide evidence on the proportion and destination (for example, private domestic consumption, sold, given to third parties, etc..) of shot woodcock birds?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you can provide credible information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4F5: Can you provide evidence on what is the market price of woodcock both wholesale and retail?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you have recently sold or bought this species and please provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4G1: Do you agree to adding woodpigeon to Schedule 2.1 in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

If “Yes”,

- All three nations
- England
- Scotland
- Wales

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. An open season would explicitly allow recreational shooting and harvesting for food.
2. An open season would clearly distinguish legitimate recreational shooting from necessary crop protection, improving transparency.
3. The proposed quarry season should be extended in line with the Natural England guidance. A later start to the close period, such as 1 April, would allow hunting during the peak damage period (January to March; identified in Fera, 2010) while still avoiding the peak reproductive period reported during the 1960-1980s (April – to August; O’Connor & Shrubbs, 1986), which more recent data suggests has since moved even later.
4. Woodpigeon populations are large, widespread, and have a long-term increasing trend in the UK (+150% since the 1960s), with no evidence that current shooting levels are unsustainable, this supports a managed open season approach.
5. Nearly all European countries regulate woodpigeon through defined hunting seasons, and the same model already applies in the UK for species like geese, providing consistency and a proven legal structure.

Q 4G2: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of woodpigeon that are shot in England, Scotland and/or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you can provide credible information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4G3: Can you provide evidence on the proportion and destination (for example, private domestic consumption, sold, given to third parties, etc..) of shot woodpigeon birds?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you can provide credible information. Be honest, avoid guesswork and provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 4G4: Can you provide evidence on what is the market price of woodpigeon both wholesale and retail?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Please respond “Yes” if you have recently sold or bought this species and please provide the figures as supplemental evidence.

Q 5A1: Do you agree the coot should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC’s code.

Additional points

5. Whilst the UK coot population shows declines in both breeding and wintering populations, the species is rarely harvested and as a result there is no modern estimates of its harvest.
6. Coot remain a fairly under-studied species, particularly in relation to their movement and population dynamics.
7. Population estimates are likely wrong, the species is thought to be undercounted due to the types of habitats it occupies and its elusive behaviour.
8. There is limited understanding of coot movement, population demographics and migration. Knowledge of the species could be improved through ringing or marking programmes that allow for capture-mark-recapture studies, submission of harvest data, and submission of wings to the BASC wing survey.

Q 5A2: Do you agree the Schedule 2.1. status of the coot should not be changed but maintained as it is in England and/or Scotland?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for this species.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC’s code.

Additional points

5. Whilst the UK coot population shows declines in both breeding and wintering populations, the species is rarely harvested and as a result there is no modern estimates of its harvest.

6. Coot remain a fairly under-studied species, particularly in relation to their movement and population dynamics.
7. Population estimates are likely wrong, the species is thought to be undercounted due to the types of habitats it occupies and its elusive behaviour.
8. There is limited understanding of coot movement, population demographics and migration. Knowledge of the species could be improved through ringing or marking programmes that allow for capture-mark-recapture studies, submission of harvest data, and submission of wings to the BASC wing survey.

Q 5A3: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of coot that are shot in England, Scotland or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 5B1: Do you agree the golden plover should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in Wales?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for all of the species that require it.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.
5. If amendments are required to this guidance, we recommend government engagement with BASC to agree an appropriate and proportionate recommendation at the next code review, due in the next 3 years.

Additional points

6. The golden plover is classified as Least Concern at UK, European, and global levels, with a large and stable overall population.
7. UK breeding populations are stable overall, and global populations are increasing, meaning there is no conservation justification for additional restrictions.
8. There is no evidence that shooting is driving declines, UK harvest levels are very low relative to population size and are considered sustainable.
9. Habitat loss, not shooting, is the real threat, declines are primarily linked to:
 - Afforestation and loss of open upland habitat
 - Changes in agricultural and moorland management
 - Climate change impacts on breeding success and food availability
10. Removing quarry status does nothing to address these primary drivers. Quarry status supports beneficial land management including
 - Grazing and heather management
 - Predator control

- Peatland restoration

11. A more effective approach would be targeted habitat and environmental policy, not restrictions on a non-impactful activity.

Q 5B2: Do you agree the Schedule 2.1. status of the golden plover should not be changed but maintained as it is in England and/or Scotland?

- Yes
- No
- Do not know

(Please provide any reasoning or evidence to support your response)

1. A legal amendment to schedule 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act is not required.
2. BASC has already provided harvest recommendations for all of the species that require it.
3. Their code is updated every 3–5 years, providing a dynamic and robust framework to ensure that harvest continues to be sustainable. In contrast, the WCA1981 has not been reviewed in over 45 years.
4. Defra should endorse BASC's code.
5. If amendments are required to this guidance, we recommend government engagement with BASC to agree an appropriate and proportionate recommendation at the next code review, due in the next 3 years.

Additional points

6. The golden plover is classified as Least Concern at UK, European, and global levels, with a large and stable overall population.
7. UK breeding populations are stable overall, and global populations are increasing, meaning there is no conservation justification for additional restrictions.
8. There is no evidence that shooting is driving declines, UK harvest levels are very low relative to population size and are considered sustainable.
9. Habitat loss, not shooting, is the real threat, declines are primarily linked to:
 - Afforestation and loss of open upland habitat
 - Changes in agricultural and moorland management
 - Climate change impacts on breeding success and food availability
10. Removing quarry status does nothing to address these primary drivers. Quarry status supports beneficial land management including
 - Grazing and heather management
 - Predator control
 - Peatland restoration
11. A more effective approach would be targeted habitat and environmental policy, not restrictions on a non-impactful activity.

Q 5B3: Can you provide more recent evidence on the number of golden plover that are shot in England, Scotland or Wales?

- Yes
- No

(Please provide further information to support your response and attach supplemental evidence if you wish)

Defra should work with BASC to develop and implement an effective and proportionate approach to improving the quality and quantity of UK harvest data.

Q 6.1 Do you think any other species should be removed from Schedule 2.1 in England, Wales or Scotland?

(Please give evidence or reasoning to support your answer in the box below:)

No

Q 6.2 Should other amendments (for example an extension or shortening of a close season be made with regard to any other species listed on Schedule 2.1 in England, Scotland or Wales?

(Please give evidence or reasoning to support your answer.)

No

Q 6.3 Should any other species be added to Schedule 2.1 in England, Scotland or Wales?

(Please give evidence or reasoning to support your answer.)

Yes, it is essential that this review considers all potential additions. I support the addition of the following species: -

- brent goose, carrion crow, cormorant, Egyptian goose, goosander, great black-backed gull, herring gull, jack snipe, jackdaw, jay, lesser black-backed gull, magpie, mandarin duck, monk parakeet, raven, ring-necked parakeet, ruddy duck, stock dove and woodpigeon.

The justification for which has been supplied by BASC.